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Beauty, Immorality, and Nature

by

Lisa Marie Kretz

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master of Arts*

Department of *Philosophy*

Edmonton, Alberta
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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

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Dr. Allen Carlson

Dr. Margaret Van de Pitte

Dr. Jennifer Welchman

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JULY 24 2003.

Abstract:

This thesis broaches the question of the relationship between immorality and beauty, and what this contributes to beauty claims we make of nature. First, I address what sorts of considerations are involved in our different senses and uses of the term beauty; namely the thick, thin, and mixed senses of beauty. Then I articulate what sort of justification is required for thick or mixed beauty claims, and lend objectivity to these claims through proposing a version of intersubjective agreement. Next, I establish that nature can express our moral, or immoral, treatment of it. In recent aesthetic theory of nature it has been proposed that ethics trumps aesthetics; I recommend an alternative, though complimentary approach, to the rubric of trumping. In concluding I examine three philosophical case studies and discuss the application of, and resultant merits and deficiencies of, the different senses of beauty when used in appeals to preserve nature.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my Father and Mother. Dad, thank you for being a foundation of love, support, pragmatism, and reminding me to have a sense of humour about it all. Mom, though you are gone, I continue to feel your love, your indubitable belief in me, and the mystery and magic you found in living, for which I will always be grateful. Thanks to the both of you for having me and encouraging me in my academic pursuits.

Preface

Addressing the relationship between immorality and beauty is contentious for a variety of reasons, most notably because the moral and aesthetic realms are often viewed as separate and unrelated spheres. The only overlap regarding the two on this sort of account is that aesthetic and moral claims are both claims of value, though the sorts of values addressed are not related to each other.

I take a different position, encouraged by the recent exploration in philosophic literature of the connection between ethics and aesthetics. I suggest our moral judgments play a role in our aesthetic judgments of beauty in the mixed or thick sense of the word. This provides a venue for moral judgments to do work from within the realm of aesthetics, rather than merely imposing moral limitations from outside the sphere of aesthetics on what can be aesthetically appreciated. I see this as a cautious step towards recognizing a more robust relationship between aesthetics and morality, using beauty as a starting point.

My view accounts for the complexity of apprehension given the various ways we perceive and what this contributes to an experience as such. I reflect the complicated character of our lived experience, and hope to contribute some insight as to what we bring to, and what is addressed by, our claims of beauty.

This importantly informs the relevance of beauty claims made in appeals to preserve nature. I argue that to the extent something expresses immorality it fails to be beautiful in the mixed or thick sense of the word. In so far as our beauty claims reveal more than just sensory pleasure derived at apprehending, and also account for our moral and intellectual value judgments of what is expressed by colours, forms, etc., in a context, then such appeals are lent ethical support. Mixed beauty claims thus do double duty, conveying value of a sensory sort as well as being morally and intellectually sound.

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Last but certainly not least, my heartfelt thanks goes to Allen Carlson. Your comments on the various drafts of this thesis were always enlightening, you conveyed ever so gently the weaknesses therein, and encouraged concise and rigorous thinking. I am a better philosopher for having studied under your tutelage. Thank you.

Beauty, Immorality, and Nature

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Introduction:

In what follows I explore elements of the intersection between ethics and aesthetics. More specifically I address the possibility of making claims of beauty regarding nature if immorality is expressed.

I distinguish what I take beauty to mean through aligning myself with George Santayana's view that beauty is objectified pleasure. I also use the distinction between thick and thin aesthetics established by John Hospers. Marcia Eaton further clarifies this division in its application to beauty. I then forward the idea of mixed beauty claims in which thick and thin beauty considerations simultaneously play a role.

My construal of beauty is subjective. To counter the limitations a subjective account inevitably faces I defend an epistemic position in which rationality leads to intersubjective agreement; thereby, beauty claims of the thick sort should coincide. This is done through turning to the principles of rationality outlined by Linda Zagzebski, and allowing for the possibility of objectively grounding our subjective beauty claims as is evidenced through the writing of Janna Thompson. I also use the work of Allen Carlson to determine the sorts of things required for making justified beauty claims.

I establish that the natural world *can* be altered in an immoral way by human beings. I do this through tracing the broadening realm of ethical considerability (as indicated by Aldo Leopold and substantiated in Roderick Nash's account) and showing that all living entities are deserving of moral consideration through appealing to Paul Taylor's position. I suggest in agreement with Taylor that as moral agents humans can act either morally or immorally toward moral subjects; moral subjects being entities that have the capacity to be harmed or benefited by our actions. I maintain alongside Taylor that respect is a fitting attitude to have towards moral subjects, and outline broadly the type of behaviour toward nature that would be considered immoral.

I then consider Yuriko Saito and Allen Carlson's answer to the question regarding the relationship that occurs between ethics and aesthetics with respect to nature, namely that ethics trumps aesthetics, and more specifically that immorality makes impossible aesthetic considerations. I suggest an alternative, though complementary, means of interpreting the role immorality plays in beauty claims. I argue that in so far as both thick and thin considerations are simultaneously at play in mixed claims, then immorality can contribute a negative element to the act of apprehension. In so doing it need not necessarily trump the act of aesthetically analyzing, nor is the pleasure derived through our thin beauty considerations necessarily destroyed. I argue that in such circumstances we would still not claim such a thing is beautiful, however, this is for reasons other than trumping. This importantly opens the realm of aesthetics to the impact of intellectual and moral values, at least in so far as they pertain to beauty. Given that I maintain, in agreement with Santayana, that beauty claims describe a solely positive experience of apprehension, and couple this with the additional premise that we do not derive pleasure from apprehending immorality being expressed, I conclude that if immorality is expressed when we are making a mixed or thick judgment regarding

beauty, then beauty, so understood, is not present. Furthermore, I maintain that nature altered in such a way, namely immorally, fails to be beautiful in the mixed or thick sense of the word for the reasons provided above.

In concluding I examine three philosophical case studies by Robert Elliot, Cheryl Foster, and Marcia Eaton, and discuss the application of, and resultant merits and deficiencies of, the different senses of beauty when used in appeals to preserve nature. In exploring the relationship that occurs between beauty, immorality and nature, I bear witness to a definite divide manifest between beauty and immorality by virtue of their contrary positioning with regard to pleasure, while beauty and nature reveal themselves as well matched and supportive companions.

Chapter One:

Beauty

Beauty has as many meanings as man has moods.
Beauty is the symbol of symbols.
Beauty reveals everything, because it expresses nothing.
When it shows us itself, it shows us the whole fiery-colored world.[1]
-Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist"

1.) a.) Introduction

Coming to terms with beauty in any general and conclusive way remains a vexing issue for philosophers, and I by no means attempt to provide a decisive answer in what follows. However, I do hope to explicate what I take beauty to broadly mean in a way sufficient to broach the ways in which it is connected to morality generally, and immorality more specifically. I find the elements of the accounts referred to in what follows to be reasonable, though certainly not indisputable. Furthermore, the line of thought I develop below is not without its limitations. However, my intent is not to establish with any finality what beauty definitively means. Rather, I am adopting and interpreting a historically acknowledged notion of beauty as a starting point from which to structure my argument.

To this end I align myself with various components of George Santayana's view derived from The Sense of Beauty: Being the outline of aesthetic theory. I maintain alongside Santayana that a beauty claim is a value claim. I also obtain from his theory that beauty is pleasure objectified. By this I mean that when we make a beauty claim we characterize a pleasing experience as though the pleasure is contained in the object or entity apprehended. Furthermore, I acknowledge and build on Santayana's notion that an experience of beauty is one of pure pleasure.

I describe beauty further through emphasizing two specific uses of the term and their interplay. John Hospers distinguishes between the thick and thin senses of aesthetic in Meaning and Truth in the Arts. Marcia Eaton applies this distinction to beauty in particular through her characterization of the contextual and Kantian sense of beauty in "Kantian and Contextual Beauty". In the thick sense, Hospers addresses the life values expressed by a thing. I parallel this with Eaton's contextual sense, in which associated ideas, values, and beliefs are the central considerations for making judgments of beauty. This *judgment* is distinguished from Hospers' thin sense or Eaton's Kantian beauty which is construed as a physical *reaction* to forms, colours, sounds, textures, etc., and their combinations, without any intellectual or moral mediation.

Next I consider the merits and failings of beauty so divided. It is worthwhile to consider what logical conclusions follow from maintaining that beauty consists of solely the thin sense, or that beauty consists of solely the thick sense. The benefit of this is two fold; first it establishes the weaknesses of thick and thin beauty when employed in isolation, and second it establishes the strengths of what I call 'mixed beauty claims'.

I put forth the notion of mixed beauty claims to address times in which considerations of thin and thick beauty are simultaneously conveyed. This broadly establishes the way in which conflicting thick and thin claims of beauty are problematically brought to a head, laying the groundwork for my discussion of immorality and beauty in Chapter Four.

1.) b.) What I Take Beauty to Mean:

1.) b.) i.) Beauty Claims are Value Judgments

Santayana, in defining beauty, holds that "Beauty is a value, that is, it is not a perception of a matter of fact or of a relation: it is an emotion, an affection of our volitional and appreciative nature."[2] As such, I maintain that to make a claim of beauty is to make a value claim as opposed to a claim regarding a human independent fact. Furthermore, I hold that beauty can describe a fact about human modes of valuation, but does not exist independently of those modes of valuation. Beauty refers to a particular experience of pleasure by a human being. As such, I suggest, it must be recognized as a human dependent assessment of the worth we attribute to, and acquire from, apprehending a thing. When we make a scientific claim, we are attempting to get at an objective fact of the matter about the world, one that holds true whether we exist or not. In contrast, when we make claims of beauty we are importantly characterizing *our* experience. Only comparable entities sharing similar modes of perception and like values are capable of apprehending beauty in the way we do.

Beauty claims are about the value *we* derive from an experience, they are not claims about the value contained within something independent of a human observer. Beauty is therefore inextricably linked with our modes of thinking and perceiving. As Santayana characterizes it, beauty is a value, therefore "it cannot be conceived as an independent existence which affects our senses and which we consequently perceive. It exists in perception, and cannot exist otherwise."[3] He describes our predisposition to talk of beauty as though it is contained in the thing perceived. Although we tend to do this, when we make claims of beauty we are actually describing the pleasure we feel at apprehending a thing. Of course, this is not independently contained in the thing itself. A thing is pleasurable to apprehend because we find it pleasurable, not because it is objectively pleasant. However, we do tend to objectify that pleasure and act as though it is contained in the thing perceived; thus, Santayana usefully characterizes beauty as pleasure objectified.

1.) b.) ii.) Beauty is Pleasure Objectified

Santayana explains the "curious but well-known psychological phenomenon, viz. the transformation of an element of sensation into the quality of a thing."[4] We clearly do this when we say X is beautiful; X being the visual, auditory, tactile, etc., thing that we take pleasure in apprehending. When we claim X is beautiful, we act as though the pleasure is contained in the object or entity itself; we treat the sensation of pleasure as though it is a quality of the entity or object. Not every pleasure need

necessarily be beautiful, but when the pleasure experienced is thought to be expressed by X so succinctly that it is perceived as a quality of X, we have a characterization of beauty. Although beauty in fact has to do with our pleasure at apprehending X, we tend to refer to the object or entity as though it is independently responsible for the pleasure, and we call X beautiful. As Santayana says, "Thus beauty is constituted by the objectification of pleasure. It is pleasure objectified."[5] Or, put differently, "Beauty is the pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing."[6]

Thus, I wish to be clear that when I am discussing beauty, what I am talking about is the pleasure derived from apprehending an object, such that the pleasure is treated as a quality of the object. Pleasure derived from the apprehension of a thing is a necessary condition for making a claim of beauty. It has to do with our response and whether we would characterize the experience of apprehending a thing as pleasurable or not. Santayana describes it as pleasure objectified because we act as though it is a quality of the object. Though we may objectify that pleasure as though it is contained in what we are apprehending, it is useful to remember the value derived is not independent of our conception of value. It is also important to note that the value we are ascribing to beauty is positive.

1.) b.) iii.) Beauty Describes a Purely Pleasurable Experience

When we describe something as beautiful we are talking about a pleasant experience, not an unpleasant one. I have already outlined that beauty is a value term, and Santayana explains further that, "...this value is positive, it is the sense of something good, or (in the case of ugliness) of its absence. It is never the perception of a positive evil, it is never a negative value. That we are endowed with the sense of beauty is a pure gain which brings no evil with it."[7] Rather than using the moral terms of good and evil I suggest we remain in the language of pleasure and displeasure. As such, beauty brings no displeasure with it. We characterize as beautiful that which is pleasurable to apprehend and not that which is not.

That being said, I think the problem has more shades of grey than the black and white definition Santayana provides. Pure beauty, untainted by any vestige of displeasure, is certainly a glorious experience. However, I submit that for most of us, it is also likely to be a relatively rare experience. I suggest we are interested not only in experiences of pure beauty, but also in those that are closer to beauty. In other words we are also interested in where on the spectrum, ranging from beauty to the lack thereof, a thing is placed. I think it important to acknowledge that there are things we would position closer to that ideal of beauty, while there are other things we would position further away. Furthermore, things that may fail to be purely beautiful in the way Santayana describes, but are nonetheless much closer to the side of beauty than to the other, are worth considering for much the same reason we find things that are purely beautiful worth considering. I address the implications of this view in more detail in Chapter Four.

1.) c.) The Senses of Beauty:

1.) c.) i.) Thick and Thin Senses of Aesthetic

Hospers distinguishes between thick and thin senses of the term aesthetic in much the same way Eaton distinguishes between Kantian and contextual senses of the term beauty. Hospers characterizes the thin sense of aesthetic as times when "we are concerned with surface and form values", as opposed to the thick sense, in which life values are expressed.[8] The thin sense addresses our unmediated sensory reaction to surface and form. However, it is through the life values expressed, that which is beyond surface and form, that we can "recognize human characters and situations in a drama, melancholy or sprightliness in a piece of music."[9] Life values address that which is expressed beyond mere formal relations. Hospers' gives the examples of a starry night and a mountain lake; in both circumstances we see more than just "pleasing colors, shapes, and volumes"; they are expressive "of many things in life, drenched with the fused association of many scenes and emotions from memory and experience."[10]

The thick sense elucidates more than the simple recognition of forms; rather, it reveals what is "conveyed through the form."[11] When we experience a thing as beautiful in the thick sense we bring both ourselves and our understanding to it. We do not make judgments in a realm separate from our content laden, lived experiences; rather, it is from within that context that such judgments can be said to be meaningful in the thick sense. "It is this taking-up-into-art of material form from life which makes art more than esthetic surface and esthetic form."[12] I suggest further that in so far as the life values I derive from an experience are to count towards claiming a thing is beautiful, those life values must likewise be expressed to others. In addition, the value derived must be comparable for both of us in scope and relevance. My intention with taking this stance is to provide room for the subjective element in beauty claims - given that I maintain they are human value judgments - while countering the notion that such a view is subjective to a fault. This issue will be addressed in detail in Chapter Two.

1.) c.) ii.) Kantian and Contextual Beauty

I think it useful to also note that Eaton juxtaposes the two separate uses of the term beauty, in a way parallel to Hospers distinction above, in the following way:

> 1. One feels the pleasure required for the judgment that something is beautiful independently of what one knows or values.[13]
> 2. The pleasure required for the judgment that something is beautiful diminishes, disappears, or is even replaced by displeasure as one's beliefs or values change.[14]

Thus, beauty is apprehended in two importantly different ways here. In 1. Eaton is addressing times in which we refer to a thing as beautiful prior to any knowledge or contextualization of the thing we are apprehending. This case draws attention to situations in which we make claims of beauty based on formal analysis alone. This correlates with Hospers' thin sense where surface and form are the sole

considerations. Claims characterized by 1. make use of what Eaton calls the Kantian sense of beauty. This deals with, and is limited to, formalist claims. In the Kantian sense, attributions of beauty are unmediated by beliefs and judgments. Thus, "If something is beautiful, one just sees it; cognitive or ethical concerns matter little."[15] In so far as we share the same biologically predetermined reactions to shapes, forms, sounds, textures, colours, etc., we will all agree on what is beautiful and what is not in the Kantian sense.

Eaton refers to judgments characterized by 2. as the contextual sense of beauty. Here beliefs and other values do make a difference to our beauty claims; knowledge and moral considerations are central.[16] It is in this thick sense of beauty that morality broadly comes into play; and more significantly, for my undertaking, it is here that the role of immorality can be considered. In the contextual sense beauty "is not independent of other human values and attitudes" and thus "attributions of beauty are related to beliefs or moral judgments."[17] In this sense of beauty, room is provided to alter our claims of beauty, despite no change being manifest in the physical makeup of the object or entity being judged. It is this sense of beauty that helps make sense of changes over time in what we characterize as beautiful. The notion of contextualization importantly contributes to Hospers' notion of life values. Life values associated with an object or entity are the result of the contextualization of the object or entity; our claims of beauty in such cases gain their meaning and relevance from their placement in time and space. As such, our estimation of beauty is effected by the social climate, what counts as relevant knowledge, what is considered of value, etc.

I hope now to have sufficiently explained the ways beauty is employed through addressing Eaton's and Hospers' clarifications of the use of the term. In what follows I use the distinction Hospers provides to differentiate between the different senses of aesthetic to delineate the like senses of beauty (thick and thin), though I think Eaton's contribution and clarification is useful. I believe Hospers' and Eaton's descriptions each emphasize aspects of, and further illuminate, a comparable distinction between the different senses of beauty.

1.) d.) Inherent Problems with Individuated Senses of Beauty:

1.) d.) i.) Thin Beauty

When we are discussing thin beauty alone we are addressing formal aesthetic considerations; we are attending to the shapes, forms, colours, lines, sounds, textures, etc., and the relations between them. This involves our sensory response to optical, auditory, tactile, and olfactory data, independently of any deeper knowledge or values. We are making a claim regarding our response, be it pleasurable or not, unmediated by any further analysis. In this sense the extent to which we can agree on beauty, or the lack thereof, is to the extent we share the same sense faculties and like reactions.

In Eaton's description of the Kantian sense of beauty she explains that our apprehension of objects and events "is in no way dependent upon a particular interest, purpose, or concept"; as such we can claim that "every other human being necessarily

ought to feel pleasure as well upon apprehending this thing", or conversely displeasure, depending on what is apprehended.[18] If we are merely responding to forms, sounds, etc., unmediated by any conscious knowledge or belief systems, then in so far as we all share the same sensory capacities and are biologically similar in our responses we should expect to have a general consensus that a thing is beautiful. On a surface level we should all recognize that forms X, Y, and Z are beautiful and forms A, B, and C are ugly. That such is not the case does not disprove that thin beauty exists. I propose two other viable explanations as to why we are far from universal agreement.

One possibility is that we do not share like biological responses to sensory stimulus; one could argue that we differ significantly in this regard. If there is considerable difference in human biology and sensory responses, there will be much variation for humans in what we find beautiful. A second possibility involves considering significant differences in beauty claims as support for the notion that our sensory reaction to visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory data is not usually an occurrence isolated from the rest of our thinking, feeling, valuing selves. I suggest later that our claims of beauty usually take into account more than the considerations involved in making thin beauty claims. I think it highly probable that this is the central reason for marked differences in claims of beauty. I think it reasonable to maintain that to the extent we limit our apprehension to the considerations of thin beauty we should have significant overlap regarding what sorts of things are pleasant to apprehend and what sorts of things are unpleasant to apprehend. That we share the same biology and place in evolutionary history increases the probability that we will make analogous claims of thin beauty. However, regardless of how we account for the empirical fact that there is disparity in what people claim to be beautiful, the same problems and limitations will apply when making claims of thin beauty.

In spite of whether we do react similarly to shapes, sounds, colours, etc., or if instead we have differing biological responses to the same stimuli, we still have no recourse to remedy an argument between two people regarding thin beauty or the lack thereof. If someone were to fail to have the same pleasant response, we would have no defensible basis for claiming that s/he *should* have such a response. We are not entitled to claim that their *response* is *wrong*; it is merely different. Although, if we were to allow that, given our shared biology, we do tend to have the same responses, we might subject a person to a physical exam to verify that it is, for example, not colour blindness or some other biological variation that is the source of this difference. As a result, one might claim these alternative responses are 'abnormal'; yet, such is not a basis for invalidating these claims. In addition, if we do so, we are met with the added problem of contending certain traits are 'normal' while others are deviant – and thus supposedly less relevant.

When people have either 'normal' or 'abnormal' responses what they apprehend remains thinly beautiful or fails to be, and by no fault of their own do they differ in their perspective. This is because thin beauty deals with a type of response that is wholly sensory, without conscious mental mediation. It is a response rather than a judgment. Put simply, it is what it is. As Santayana states; "The pleasures of the senses have, it is said, no dogmatism in them; that anything gives me pleasure involves no assertion about its capacity to give pleasure to another"[19] As such, claims

of beauty thinly construed nullify our ability to make a case for, or against, a thing being beautiful. It is either agreed that a thing is beautiful due to a shared reaction over which we have no control, or people fail to agree a thing is beautiful given differing sensory responses, but in either case the claim of the independent perceiver is ultimately inherently subjective and definitive.

It is important to recognize that even when we limit the question of beauty to formal aesthetic considerations we are still importing a variety of substantial restrictions that inform the possibility or impossibility of deriving pleasure. For example, that I am capable of seeing colour, that my eyes function in particular and limited ways, that I can only hear a restricted range of sounds, all shape the nature of my experience and my claim that a thing is beautiful or otherwise. Our conceptualization of the world, even at the most decontextualized level possible, still relevantly structures our way of viewing – biologically informing the scope of things we are capable of appreciating and incapable of appreciating. Even when we attempt to distance ourselves from any intellectually or morally informed value judgments regarding a thing apprehended it is important to note we still have a value system in place here, in that we value things we find pleasing. What we find pleasing to apprehend via our senses is a product of what and how we apprehend. It is in this way we can still say human values relevantly structure whether a thing is characterized as beautiful, or not, even in the thin sense.

Thin beauty claims are relevant in that they most certainly characterize an important aspect of our notion of beauty; they address the sensuous component of the pleasure we derive and objectify. That a thing is thinly beautiful depends on an individual's subjective sensory response. That a thing is thinly beautiful for any group of people depends on their shared biology and shared response. As a result, though we may allow for differing experiences of thin beauty to be recognized as pleasant experiences, that such experiences are relevant to others is not necessarily due to agreement on a thing being thinly beautiful. Rather, it is because we agree experiences of thin beauty are pleasant that we may acknowledge the importance of preserving a thing others find beautiful, though not necessarily ourselves.

Given the nature of thin beauty claims, there is no room for debate as to whether a thing is beautiful or not. Furthermore, there need not be agreement on what things are beautiful, shared biological responses aside. When it comes to claims of preserving and appreciating that which is beautiful without a less adamantly subjective notion of beauty we are at a clear disadvantage. If our beauty claims are to be defensible, if we are to allow a role for judging whether a thing is beautiful or not, we must move beyond the limitations of thin beauty claims. If by beauty we mean to address more than independent and subjective pleasures (though arguably with significant overlap given our shared biology), we must push beyond the limits of thin beauty.

1.) d.) ii.) Thick Beauty

Thick beauty judgments address that which is expressed by a thing other than its surface and form. This sense of beauty addresses the associated life values that collections of surfaces and forms in contexts express. When we address the life

values expressed, namely, what such a thing means to us in such a context, we include the moral and intellectual values expressed. By intellectual values, I mean those values adopted by us that are non-moral. I will argue in Chapter Two that the moral and intellectual values expressed are an essential part of a qualified thick or mixed beauty judgment; they create a foundation from which we can make *demonstrable* claims of value or the lack thereof. It is useful to contrast the thin sense which describes a *reaction* to forms, colours, sounds, etc. with the *judgment* involved in claiming a thing is thickly beautiful. With thick beauty the pleasure is derived through the expression of life values that we find pleasant to apprehend. We can judge the life values a particular thing expresses; but with the introduction of new and relevant information we can alter that view, and resultantly make a different judgment. Whether a thing is considered thickly beautiful or not changes according to the life values we believe are expressed. This importantly accounts for the way in which beauty claims can be made and then changed over time, despite the object or entity remaining physically the same.

Now, in so far as we are discussing thick beauty, and therefore giving primacy to the life values being expressed, the emphasis is placed on our mental analysis (as distinguished from our unmediated sensory response) of what is expressed by such an object or entity. As such, it leans precariously close to being something other than an aesthetic judgment. With thick beauty considerations the sensuous aspect of beauty is diminished to such an extent one begins to wonder if we have an intellectual or moral judgment here rather than an aesthetic one. Though the pleasure is necessarily objectified, the object of such pleasure is not sensuously appreciated in any focussed way. Although it is important to provide a place for what is expressed other than surface and form when we apprehend an object, to do so at the expense of meaningful sensuous interaction is to construe beauty too narrowly.

I suggest that although the notions of thick and thin beauty importantly address relevant components of our claims of beauty, and help to clarify aspects of our notion of what beauty is, when construed independently of each other they leave much to be desired.

1.) e.) Introduction of the Notion of Mixed Beauty Claims

Thin beauty claims as they stand-alone are construed too narrowly in that they cannot be disputed and are subjective to a fault; yet, they address the central and necessary sensuous element of beauty. Thick beauty explains variations over time regarding beauty claims of objects or entities that remain physically the same. Thick beauty claims also provide room for that which is expressed by forms, shapes, colours, etc., in combination in a context. However, when conceived of independently of thin beauty these claims assume a relatively non-aesthetic character. I want to provide a space in which the merits of both of these senses of beauty can be employed, while compensating for their deficiencies. I call the sense of beauty in which both are recognized as relevant components of beauty the mixed sense of beauty.

In such cases, we are apprehending a thing within the context of associated beliefs and values, but this is not to say we are thus not effected by our thin response.

Mixed cases demarcate circumstances where thin and thick criteria are jointly articulated. These mixed cases are differentiated from situations where, although a thing conveys thin responses and thick judgments simultaneously, they are thought to belong to entirely separate and unrelated realms. Mixed cases allow for exploration of the overlap between the two senses in our perception of a thing. Put differently, with mixed cases what is expressed is not limited to an accumulation of forms, shapes, sounds, textures, etc., nor is it limited to the mental associations we have with those forms, shapes, sounds, textures, etc. It takes into account both thick and thin beauty, as well as the relationship between the two. I explore cases where thick and thin beauty are distinct but not separate.

In mixed claims we address both aspects of what Santayana demands for expression. For Santayana, what is expressed by an object or entity involves both the object presented and the object suggested. Santayana defines expression as "the quality…acquired by objects through association."[20] He also delineates two terms of expression, the object presented (the word, image, etc.) and the object suggested (the further thought, emotion, image evoked, etc.), which "lie together in the mind, and their union constitutes expression."[21] I consider the object presented to be the physical object or entity, and the object suggested to be what is further expressed to us by such an object or entity in particular contexts. According to Santayana, not until we "suffuse the symbols themselves with the emotions they arouse…will the expressiveness constitute a beauty."[22] To restate, expressiveness is "the power given by experience to any image to call up others in the mind; and this expressiveness becomes aesthetic value, that is, becomes expression, when the value involved in the associations thus awakened are incorporated in the present object."[23] Though this notion of expression is useful for illuminating what occurs when we make mixed claims of beauty, I also allow for times in which the object presented and the object suggested are of primary consideration independently of each other. By this I mean we can still speak intelligibly of the beauty of the object presented (thin claims) as distinguished from the beauty of the object suggested (thick claims), as well as the times in which they lie together in the mind (mixed claims).

Mixed judgments address both our unmediated sensory response and the mediated mental analysis of the life values conveyed. In such cases we do not seek to isolate our mental analysis and sensory reaction. Indeed, to do so in the way required for maintaining thick and thin beauty in complete isolation requires a radical separation between mind and body. Rather, I intend to explore whether a thing is pleasurable to apprehend when both components are evidenced. Regarding conflicting thick and thin beauty claims, in so far as we are willing to keep our thinking and sensing selves separate there is no tension. However, I maintain that there are times when such considerations are not so tidily separated; and this is when the conflicting senses of beauty are problematically brought to a head. Instances where thin considerations are in conflict with thick considerations, specifically with thin beauty and immorality, will be discussed in depth in Chapter Four. At present, it is enough to have established what is meant by thick and thin beauty claims, and to have introduced the notion of mixed beauty claims.

1.) f.) Conclusion

The discussion above is meant to clarify what I take beauty to mean as well as to clearly delineate the different senses of beauty, and to introduce the mixed sense of beauty. When we speak of beauty we are making a value claim. This value is linked to our pleasure at apprehending a thing. Though we have a tendency to speak as though it is contained within the thing apprehended, in fact, we are making a claim based on what we perceive, and whether we derive pleasure that we objectify. When we characterize an experience as beautiful we are describing a positive experience.

There is at minimum one of three different senses of beauty at play when we make beauty claims. One is the thin sense described by Hospers, which I align with Eaton's Kantian sense, which deals with unmediated sensory reaction to colours, forms, shapes, smells, sounds, textures, etc. The second is the thick sense in which the life values expressed to us, the mental associations that accompany apprehending a thing, our beliefs and values, are the deciding factor in whether apprehending it is pleasurable or not. This is why Eaton states that the "pleasure required for the judgment that something is beautiful diminishes, disappears, or is even replaced by displeasure as one's beliefs or values change."[24] And finally, there are also mixed cases in which thin beauty and thick beauty (or the lack thereof) are conveyed and considered together.

In mixed cases we are discussing not just form but the content simultaneously expressed through that form. Cases of mixed beauty are the result of apprehending a thing on multiple levels concurrently such that they constitute one unified experience of pleasure. The pleasure derived from such an experience is of the sensory sort *and* has to do with our thinking selves; it includes our moral and intellectual beliefs and values. To be classified as beautiful it must produce pleasure within the context of those beliefs and values, and if we are to counter a severe mind/body division, we also must have a pleasant sensory response. This sense of beauty is far more complex and demanding than the thin or thick sense alone. Prior to looking at ways in which beauty relates to morality I would like to counter the worry that, given my alignment of beauty with pleasure, and given that it is a human derived value judgment, such judgments are hopelessly subjective.

Notes

1. Oscar Wilde, The Oxford Authors: Oscar Wilde, ed. Isobel Murray (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 264.

2. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty: Being the outline of aesthetic theory (1896; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), 31.

3. Santayana, 29.

4. Santayana, 28-29.

5. Santayana, 33.

6. Santayana, 31.

7. Santayana, 31.

8. John Hospers, Meaning and Truth in the Arts (1946; reprint, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 13-14.

9. Hospers, 12-13.

10. Hospers, 12-13.

11. Hospers, 12.

12. Hospers, 12.

13. I think it relevant to note that although Eaton uses the term judgment here she is emphasizing those times in which we are not concentrating on forming a considered judgment. Rather, she is describing an unmediated response that occurs independently of what we consciously know or value. As such I discuss this as a response rather than a judgment.

14. Marcia Eaton, "Kantian and Contextual Beauty," in Beauty Matters, ed. Peg Zeglin Brand (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 33, 27-36.

15. Eaton, 27.

16. It is interesting to note that beauty "does not appear in ancient thought or literature with its specific modern connotations. The Greek tem καλον and its Latin equivalent (*pulchrum*) were never neatly or consistently distinguished from the moral good." Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," in Aesthetics, eds. Susan Feagin and Patrick Maynard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91-92, 90-102.

17. Eaton, 27.

18. Eaton, 28.

19. Santayana, 26.

20. Santayana, 119.

21. Santayana, 121.

22. Santayana, 122.

23. Santayana, 122.

24. Eaton, 33.

Chapter Two:

Judgment, Justification, and Beauty

Knowledge is directed to what is, to know it as it is.[1]

– Plato, The Republic

2.) a.) Introduction

One could argue that a pressing problem arises as a result of the subjective construal of beauty outlined in Chapter One. Namely, the concern that, if beauty is understood to be subjective, then it necessarily follows that one might judge a thing to be beautiful, while another might hold the opposite position, and both could be equally correct. With such a view the possibility of an objectively true beauty claim is, arguably, ultimately sacrificed. Instead a true beauty claim need only be "true for you" in your subjective estimation of value. My intention in this chapter is to defend an epistemic position in which rational intersubjective agreement, regarding judgments of beauty, addresses this issue.

In recognizing the subjective nature of beauty in Chapter One, I mean only to address that such values refer to human values; when we claim a thing is beautiful we are not referencing an independent objective fact about the world. I still maintain that the degree to which claims of beauty are pragmatically useful is the degree to which they address what is shared by all human beings. Deciphering a thing's thick or mixed beauty is relevant for my purposes to the extent that we can say a thing *is* beautiful, and that any rational person would agree to this judgment. To this end, I explore what sorts of things provide justification for maintaining a judgment of beauty. Here, I am primarily interested in the thick and mixed senses of beauty because it is only in these senses that one can claim to be making a *judgment*.

Using Linda Zagzebski's principles for rationality, I carve out a position in which rationality leads to intersubjective agreement; thereby, beauty claims of the thick sort should coincide. By this I mean agreement will exist regarding the nature of beauty, and resultantly agreement will exist regarding what objects or entities should be considered beautiful by human beings. I use Janna Thompson's explication of beauty to outline the way in which subjective value judgments can be objectively grounded. I also use Thompson's position as a jumping off point for discussing the way in which some judgments are justified, and how some people are in a better position to judge whether beauty is in fact being expressed. To further this end, I align myself with Allen Carlson's argument that knowing what a thing is puts us in a better position to make a true aesthetic judgment.[2] I also derive from Carlson the additional criteria that, to make true aesthetic judgments, we must endeavour to avoid aesthetic omissions and deceptions.

As such, I contend there are justified and unjustified beauty claims. Furthermore, some people are in a better position than others to make such judgments, depending on the breath and scope of their knowledge (assuming rationality, open-mindedness, sensitivity, etc.) The authority of the judgment rests on whether it is rationally arrived at, is based on relevant information, and the extent of the knowledge it is based on. The justification of our beauty claim increases relative

to the degree that aesthetic omissions and deceptions are avoided. The scope of relevant knowledge for making a justified beauty claim is broadly construed as that which includes knowledge of what a thing is and what it expresses.

2.) b.) Avoiding the Pitfalls of Subjectivity

2.) b.) i.) Despite the Subjective Nature of Beauty Claims There Are Still Defensible Grounds for Intersubjective Agreement

I have maintained that beauty is inherently subjective in that it is a human value claim. However, this is not to say such judgments are arbitrarily subjective, the merits and failings of such judgments can still be addressed. Intersubjective agreement allows for beauty claims to extend beyond the inherent limitations of individual subjectivity, while still allowing that the nature of the value identified rests within the human perceiver. It is important to establish that just because beauty judgments are ultimately value judgments it does not mean that a beauty claim has little or no meaning beyond *my* individual preference or pleasure. I am seeking to address that which we would all, as rational human beings, judge to be beautiful to apprehend, while simultaneously recognizing all claims of beauty rest in *us* - in the pleasure *we* derive from apprehending a thing.

Although a beauty claim is a value claim that addresses the pleasure we derive from apprehending an object or entity, we can still maintain that judgments of beauty should, in due course, coincide. That such judgments will ultimately coincide, I contend, is derived from a necessary supposition for rational discourse. Namely, to justify dialogue with any person we must believe in the like rationality of human beings, and that any rational person is subject to the power of good reasoning. Zagzebski outlines principles of rationality that, I think, are useful for illustrating the way in which rationality leads to shared beliefs.

Zagzebski suggests three principles of rationality meant to reflect both its transcendence and immanence. The transcendent element reminds us to address what is universal, the common thread that unifies our understanding of what it is to be rational. The immanent element addresses real world instantiations, and if there is variance it must be accounted for. The first principle makes evident the transcendence of reason; "If a belief is rational its rationality is recognizable (in principle) by rational persons in other cultures."[3] The 'in principle' allows us to explain differences in beliefs in varying cultures. Though Zabzebski does not necessarily position herself this way, I suggest we account for differences in cultural beliefs through recognizing that such beliefs are based on more or less data. As such, differing, though equally rational beliefs, can be maintained (given the differences of exposure to contributory data). However, once new and relevant data is introduced, and the same data is available to all, rational judgments should coincide accordingly, given that we are all equally capable of recognizing rationality in others as well as ourselves.

Zagzebski's second and third principles also assist in illustrating elements of rationality. The second principle of rationality Zagzebski asserts is as follows: if a culture is rational, we can assume "The beliefs of one culture are prima facie as

justified as the beliefs of any other culture."[4] This is not to say all cultures, at present, must necessarily agree; given what I have suggested above, only in so far as cultures are exposed to the same sort of data will they come to the same rational conclusions. This principle underscores the importance of assuming a like rationalization process in others.

The third principle she addresses is that, "It is rational to attempt to resolve putative conflicts of beliefs between cultures."[5] When there is conflict about something we hold to be important, in so far as we are rational, and believe others to be as well, we seek to resolve this conflict. These are broad principles of rationality, but, principles I hope are safe to assume without controversy. They are principles that have very real ramifications for judgments of beauty, particularly when dealing with disagreements as to when beauty is, or is not, present.

For example, if Jim maintains that A is beautiful and B is not for reasons X, Y, and Z, and Linda maintains that B is beautiful and A is not for reasons U, V, and W, they are seemingly at an impasse. However, to the extent that Jim and Linda are both rational, they will attempt to resolve this putative conflict. Furthermore, to the extent that they are rational, both will accept as prima facie justified that the reasons the other provides for maintaining his or her own view are rational. Thus, the reasons U…Z will all have to be explored, the relevance of their relation to beauty hashed out, and to the degree to which Jim and Linda are rational, the conflict will be resolved. Jim and Linda will make an 'all things' considered judgment, taking into account U…Z, to definitively reason out whether A and B are beautiful or not.

In so far as we are all rational humans, and in so far as my reasons for maintaining a position are justified such that these reasons are equally good reasons for you to maintain the same position, we should be able to come to some sort of amicable agreement. In other words, if we as humans are all equally rational, we will also agree on what is rational to believe and maintain. With time, patience, clear reasoning, good knowledge of ourselves and other entities, exacting language, and healthy optimism, agreement is not only probable but also a good direction in which to aim. This is the direction in which rationality points, and it is the path that supports our efforts at successfully communicating with each other.

That being said, I am all too aware that this aspiration for 'rational consensus' among all human beings is extremely idealistic. Furthermore, we are far from achieving such a state of affairs. However, I also think it a necessary stance to take if we are to seriously defend any position, in that it is only in so far as we are rational and presume the principles of rationality outlined above that attempting argument is advisable. So, although we are far from achieving intersubjective agreement regarding beliefs and values, I suggest we adhere to the principles of rationality, and maintain that more or less justified beliefs and judgments regarding beauty are possible. In addition, given the demands of rationality, I maintain that the reasons that hold for justifying a judgment that a thing is beautiful are reasons that will hold for any rational person.

2.) b.) ii.) We Can Still Objectively Ground Our Subjective Value Claims of Beauty

I propose that a thick or mixed beauty judgment can be more or less informed and, as such, more or less justified by virtue of the reasons we give to support our claim. Put differently, I suggest good reasons can be provided for justifying and maintaining our belief that a thing is beautiful or otherwise. This interpretation of beauty permits me to say "X is beautiful because…", and allows for the following reasons to be more or less convincing. It allows for there to be defensible reasons for maintaining beauty claims. Any definition that rests on subjective value judgments has inherent limitations; however, we can still recognize defensible grounds for claiming a thing *is* beautiful for humans to apprehend, and *should* be found beautiful by any other human. Such claims can still be true or false provided that we agree on what the relevant criteria are for claiming a thing is beautiful, and why such criteria are relevant. Thompson's explication of the way in which subjective value judgments can be objectively grounded is useful and helps introduce the criteria required for forming justified judgments of beauty.

Thompson holds, in accordance with Santayana, that beauty claims are value claims regarding the thing apprehended. Thompson contends that, despite the subjective element of value claims, we can still have objective grounds for making those value claims. Thompson calls objective grounds those that "rational, sensitive people can accept - for thinking that something has value."[6] As such, we need not assume that "beauty and other aesthetic values are real properties of objects," nor do we have "to suppose that the value of works of art or nature is independent of human perceivers."[7] Rather, objectivity is tied to the nature of our judgment; it addresses the quality of our reasons for maintaining that a thing is beautiful or otherwise.

On this interpretation of beauty, we can rationally decide on criteria that must be met for a claim to be justified. We can see what sorts of reasons support a claim and what sorts of reasons fail to. In the thick sense, for us to be capable of deriving pleasure, life values we find pleasant to apprehend must be expressed. As such, we must share like values and recognize their expression in like ways if we are to make like characterizations of whether or not such a thing is beautiful. Beauty claims have changed through the centuries, and certainly vary across cultures. With differing values, we have differing criteria for beauty. However, I suggest, a common thread runs through every human judgment of thick beauty – namely that of rationality. This is such that, if we are exposed to differing values, and we are open minded and rational, we will look newly at what we have come to believe, question its legitimacy if necessary, and come to an agreement on what is rational to maintain.

Not all judgments are thus considered equal, some are justified and others not, and some people are better positioned for making such judgments. Thompson points out that this happens regularly in the art world; we *do* give reasons for our aesthetic judgments. We also have people specially situated to be capable of making such judgments.[8] This is why there are art critics; namely, people that we deem to be in a good position (or better position than ourselves) to make judgments, and provide justification for those judgments. These are judgments and justifications that would hold for any rational, sensitive – and I would add open minded, fair, thorough, and attentive, etc., person.[9] As David Hume recognizes, some are better positioned to

judge, and are recognized as such, "Though men [and women] of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of [hu]mankind."[10] As such, although this is fundamentally an anthropocentrically based judgment regarding value, our judgments can still be more or less entitled. They are entitled to the extent that we actively attempt to get at what a thing actually expresses.

Thompson contends that, "An aesthetics of nature must appeal to what human beings, situated as they are, can find significant, enhancing, a joy for the senses, or a spur to the imagination and intellect…Nevertheless, an environmental aesthetics requires of human perceivers that they learn how to value natural things for what they are."[11] Resultantly, the pleasure we derive from apprehending a thing is held in check by the demand for getting it right about what such a thing is, in fact. By valuing things as they are, rather than as they might appear to be, or in a way that ensures that the most pleasure is derived, we are attempting to be as objective as possible in our judgment.[12] To the extent we do this, we address what is actually expressed by a thing in its totality, rather than placing, or allowing for blinders, to ensure a pleasant experience. Here, a demand for justification of our judgments is introduced. Justified judgments of beauty require that we characterize a thing correctly, that we are being as objective as possible in our appraisal of it. If we are willing to acquiesce that the end result of rational communication is intersubjective agreement regarding what objects or entities are beautiful, and recognize that such judgments can be more or less justified, then the next concern regards what criteria are relevant when it comes to judging a thing beautiful or otherwise. Carlson provides broad, but very useful, criteria to outline what is required for making justified judgments of beauty; namely, the avoidance of omissions and deceptions and the accumulation of relevant knowledge.

2.) c.) What is Required to Make Justified Beauty Claims

2.) c.) i.) The Avoidance of Omissions and Deceptions

In the aim of obtaining intersubjective agreement regarding our judgments of beauty I suggest, alongside Carlson, that it involves avoiding aesthetic omissions and deceptions. Carlson argues that we must perceive an object "in the category of what it *is* as opposed to what it *appears to be*."[13] By doing this, we avoid committing both aesthetic omissions (failing to appreciate the object under descriptions that are true of it) and aesthetic deceptions (appreciating it under descriptions that are false of it).[14] If we omit relevant information then the original claim can be terminated by knowledge of what it really is, and if we fall prey to aesthetic deception then the mistaken categorization can result in a false belief.[15] Now, this is not to say that in our day-to-day judgments of beauty we do not regularly omit a plethora of relevant information, and are deceived in a great many ways. As a result, we make claims with our limited knowledge for the sake of practicality. However, if we are introduced to relevant knowledge, our judgment must necessarily alter to reflect this. Furthermore, if someone is in a better position to make such a judgment we must regard her or his judgment correspondingly.

That there are people better situated to judge, I suggest, is a given. This is why we have a doctor judge the best way to attend to a broken limb, why we have a chef determine the best way to sauté an onion, and why we ask a music aficionado to locate those hard to find albums. Where then is the ideal judge regarding thick beauty? Even in so far as we are actively searching for what is actually expressed, addressing what a thing is rather than what it appears to be, one might argue we are still seemingly rather ambiguously placed for deciphering whom it is that will make the most justified judgments regarding beauty.

This is because judgments of beauty include *all* things apprehended. But this need not deter us from locating those in a better position to make judgments. In failing to acquire the knowledge required for 'getting it right' ourselves, namely, knowing what a thing actually is, and what is in fact being expressed, we do turn to those in a better position to make a claim that is true. This is why we acknowledge that the art critic of the Renaissance period is in a better position to judge Renaissance paintings, and that the naturalist is in a better position to judge nature. Thus, I suggest that it is through the accumulation of relevant knowledge ourselves, or through the recognition and appreciation of relevant knowledge in others, that we are better placed to avoid aesthetic omissions and deceptions, and ultimately get it right about what a particular thing expresses in a particular context.

2.) c.) ii.) The Accumulation of Relevant Knowledge

Carlson suggests, "in order to appreciate what aesthetic qualities a work has, it is necessary to know how it is to be seen. And knowing how it is to be seen is a function of *knowing what it is and something about it* [my emphasis]."[16] To judge a thing in a justified way we must first know it, or at minimum seek to know it in the most relevant and informative way possible. The sort of knowledge required by Carlson for making claims of beauty in nature is of the scientific or commonsense variety.[17] Thomas Heyd, Noel Carroll, and Yuriko Saito, all question the exclusivity of scientific knowledge and make a move to extend the sort of knowledge capable of being useful in specifically nature appreciation.[18] Though it may not *always* be necessary for aesthetic appreciation, we can certainly conceive of times when scientific or commonsense knowledge *is* necessary for informing a sound basis from which to estimate what is being expressed, as well as the value therein. I think it reasonable to assert that, in many cases of nature appreciation, scientific and commonsense knowledge are certainly capable of altering the quality and scope of that appreciation through illuminating what in fact a thing is and what it means within that context. However, my aim is not to defend the view that knowledge of the sort outlined by Carlson is necessary for making justified judgments of nature.

My focus here is to align myself with his view that knowing what a thing is and something about it puts us in a better position to judge what is in fact being expressed. The sort of knowing that is relevant depends on what is being apprehended. Regardless of what is being apprehended the standard for relevant knowledge remains. However, the sort of knowledge required changes depending on what is being judged. I advocate common sense in deciding on the criteria that are

relevant and those that are not, coupled, of course, with the requisite intersubjective agreement arrived at via rational judgment.

It can be argued that knowledge of what, in fact, is expressed by an object or entity is not necessary for aesthetic appreciation; and indeed, when we are discussing thin beauty it never is. On the account I forward thin beauty claims are not susceptible to being correct or incorrect, see 1.) d.) i.). However, if we are discussing intersubjectively justifiable judgments of beauty in the thick sense, then knowledge of what is, in fact, being expressed is necessary. For this reason I limit the application of Carlson's view to thick claims and the role they play in mixed claims.[19] I am not saying that times do not exist when only sensory experience informs our claim of beauty. Rather, I am suggesting that if a beauty claim is addressing more than just an individual subjective and unmediated preference, then for such a claim to be justified the reasons for finding it beautiful must be based on knowledge of the thing we are making a claim about.

Whether knowledge of what a thing is, and what it expresses in its context, results in an increase or decrease in aesthetic appreciation is irrelevant to whether such knowledge should be pursued. The reason such knowledge should be pursued is that it puts us in a position to make a justified claim. It allows us to make a claim that is correct, or as correct as it can be given our current limitations - in the future new data may contribute to our maintaining a different position. This demand for knowledge advocates veracity rather than a hedonistic desire for aesthetic pleasure at all costs. We address what is actually expressed by such a thing, rather than construing it in a way to best allow for pleasant aesthetic consumption. We are thereby placing the importance of truth over aesthetic pleasure. This demand for truth can be further buttressed by a moral demand to get it right in the case of nature. Yuriko Saito argues that the ultimate rationale for appropriate appreciation is,

> ...the moral importance of recognizing and sympathetically lending our ears to the story, however unfamiliar to us, told by the other. Without reference to its moral importance, the concern for truthfulness in our aesthetic judgment can be outweighed by the fact that improper appreciation (based upon false or irrelevant information or by ignoring any information) would sometimes yield more pleasant, exciting, or easier experience.[20]

Given most philosophers penchant for truth, I think that for many this is reason enough to attempt to get it right about the thing being judged. However, the further support of a moral rationale is useful for countering brazen hedonists.

2.) d.) Conclusion

In the above discussion I hope to have made a convincing case for a subjective notion of beauty that preserves our ability to be more or less justified in our judgments of beauty. If we allow that we are equally rational human beings, then we can anticipate a future where intersubjective agreement is not only possible, but also probable. That such agreement is not currently evident need not deter us from adhering to a position that predicts rational judgments will coincide when based on the same factual data and when we all follow the principles of rationality.

That *all* relevant data be considered is an extremely broad construal of justification, and as I have said, I do not believe in our day-to-day estimations of beauty we have such justification. However, if we want our thick beauty judgments to carry weight, we must educate ourselves about what indeed is being apprehended. Furthermore, some are certainly in a better position to judge and we can, and do, recognize them as such. The sort of knowledge required for justified claims need not be limited to scientific knowledge, and in a variety of cases such knowledge may not be relevant, but when it is, we must utilize what this perspective offers in the aim for objectivity. Objectivity is lent through our efforts to apprehend a thing as it is rather than as we might prefer it to be, this necessitates avoiding aesthetic omissions and deceptions and taking into consideration all relevant knowledge. It also involves looking beyond our own aesthetic hedonism towards what a thing actually is in so far as we are capable.

Through forwarding this view I mean to avoid the pitfalls of a purely subjective position, while still maintaining that beauty judgments are ultimately limited to human based evaluations. Now that the central problem that arises from beauty understood subjectively has been examined and attended to I can move on to discussing the relationship between immorality and nature.

Notes

1. Plato, Plato's Republic, trans. G.M. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), 138.

2. Though I refer to truth and falsity, correctness and incorrectness, as well as objectivity, I do not mean for these terms to denote absolutes in the sense that they are independent of humanity. Rather, in aiming for truth or correctness, we are trying to locate what is rational to maintain for all persons, questions of scientific truth aside. My account of objectivity recognizes the limits of our human perspective, and I venture intersubjective agreement as the extent to which it can be reached regarding our beauty claims.

3. Linda Zagzebski, "*Phronesis* and Religious Belief," in Knowledge, Belief, and Character: Readings in Virtue Epistemology, ed. Guy Axtell (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 208, 205-220.

4. Zagzebski, 209.

5. Zagzebski, 209.

6. Janna Thompson, "Aesthetics and the Value of Nature," Environmental Ethics 17 (1995): 292, 291-305.

7. Thompson, 293.

8. Thompson, 293.

9. I take these additional criteria from Zagzebski, 215.

10. David Hume, "On the Standard of Taste," in The Philosophy of David Hume, ed. V.C. Chappell (New York: Random House Inc., 1963), 495, 481-500. To recognize those of 'delicate taste' we need not have equally developed 'delicate taste'. Rather, we need only have the capacity to recognize those traits within ourselves and others that need to be developed to best enable one to make justified judgments. For my purposes the superiority of a person's faculties is derived from their rational analysis of relevant data that supports a justified judgment of beauty.

11. Thompson, 305.

12. I am thinking here that, despite the limitations of our perspective, we can still place ourselves to better get at what a thing actually is to inform our value judgments. Yuriko Saito says it well when she states, "Granted that our understanding of the other is always limited by the possibility that our own viewpoint, whether egocentric, ethnocentric, present-minded, or anthropocentric, may be coloring our perception of the other. However, within this limitation, there are

different degrees of responsive and responsible effort we make to understand the other." Yuriko Saito, "Appreciating Nature on its Own Terms," Environmental Ethics 20 (1998): 143, 135-149.

13. Allen Carlson, Aesthetics and the Environment: The appreciation of nature, art and architecture (New York: Routledge, 2000), 65.

14. Carlson, 65.

15. Carlson, 66.

16. Carlson, 88.

17. Carlson, 49.

18. Thomas Heyd, "Aesthetic Appreciation and the Many Stories About Nature," British Journal of Aesthetics 42 (2001): 125-137. Noel Carroll, "On being moved by nature: between religion and natural history," in Landscape, natural beauty and the arts, eds. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 244-266. Saito, 135-149. I suggest such questions are also important for aesthetic claims in general.

19. Although Carlson establishes the demand for knowledge of what a thing is to ensure that we judge it under categories that are appropriate, thus enabling us to make a true aesthetic judgment, I think his position lends itself directly to making a comparable demand for the more robust considerations involved in thick beauty to which I apply it. Namely that we get it right regarding the sorts of life values that actually are expressed, for the same sorts of reasons I outline throughout.

20. Saito, 142.

Chapter Three:

Immorality and Nature

Obligations have no meaning without conscience, and the problem we face is the extension of the social conscience from people to land. No important change in ethics was ever accomplished without an internal change in our intellectual emphasis, loyalties, affections, and convictions.[1]

-Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There

3.) a.) Introduction

Prior to discussing the relationship between immorality and beauty in nature I must first establish that our behaviour toward nature *can* result in the expression of something immoral. I assume nature qua nature is amoral; it is only in so far as one can be a moral agent, advocating certain rules of conduct and rationally adhering to them, that we are entitled to say that an act performed by such an agent is moral or immoral. Given that only moral agents can commit moral and immoral acts, one might inquire as to what role immorality can possibly play in our assessment of the beauty of nature; this chapter addresses that concern.

I argue that amoral entities can be the recipients of immoral acts committed by moral agents, and thus express the results. I suggest that when humans, as moral agents, manipulate nature in an immoral way it will then express the immorality of *our* actions towards it. If nature has been so wronged, we must take this into account when judging whether we would call it beautiful in the mixed or thick sense of the word.

The rough definition of nature I work with is: that which is non-human and not altered by humans; thus, an environment or entity is considered more natural to the degree it has escaped human manipulation. Although it can be argued that all nature has been altered in some way by humans, be it indirectly through our pollutants, or directly through physically inhabiting places, we can still maintain that some places are more natural (i.e. less altered) and some places less natural (i.e. more altered). Like Robert Elliot I take natural to mean "something like 'unmodified by human activity.'"[2] In so doing, I do not wish to separate or privilege humans as though we exist outside the realm of nature, I merely mean to address the conventional distinction between environments and entities that are considered natural and those that are not. Though I am aware of the controversial and difficult, if not impossible, attempt to draw a definitive line between what is natural and what is not, I still think it pragmatically useful speak of nature. There are a myriad of things that fall between the two extremes of pristine nature and human artefact; my concern in what follows is to address that which lies closer to the side of nature.

I defend the view that nonhuman entities can, and should, be morally considered. I employ what I believe is an intuitively compelling constituent of morality captured in the writing of Roderick Nash and Aldo Leopold; namely that, as we evolve morally, moral claims reflect an expanding realm of considerability as befits benevolent thinking. I also maintain the position that living organisms are appropriate subjects of moral consideration through turning to the writing of Paul

Taylor. Along with Taylor I hold that respect is a fitting moral response to other teleological centers of life, though I provide a less radical construal of how this respect can be manifest. Through employing components of Taylor's ethic of respect I give a sense of the sorts of things that would likely be classified as involving, and thus expressing, the immoral treatment of nature by human beings.

3.) b.) Ethical Evolution Involves Broadening the Scope of Moral Considerability

The notion of an expanding realm of consideration within the context of environmental ethics inevitably evokes the writings of Leopold. In his renowned account Leopold traces the development of ethics from the relation between individuals, to the relation between individuals and society, and from this he hypothesizes about "the evolutionary possibility and ecological necessity" of an ethic that will deal with our "relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it"; namely, a land ethic.[3] By land, Leopold proposes far more than the ordinary connotation of brown earth; rather, the land ethic "enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land."[4] This development from our concern with relationships between each other, to the broader construal of our relationship with society as a whole, to the relationship we have with the earth, is reflective of moral evolution on our part, marking a movement from our non-moral concern for the self to concern for others.

Nash outlines the evolution of our pre-ethical consideration with the self alone, to the ethical past in which the realm of considerability stretched outward to our family, tribe and religious sect.[5] From this he traces the development in our present day scope of consideration from our nation, to other races, to humans in general, and from this to other animals; and he conceives of a future where plants, life, rocks, ecosystems, the planet, and finally the universe as a whole is taken into consideration by all human beings.[6] Both Leopold and Nash address an empirical fact in the history of Western ethics regarding the sorts of things we have come to consider when making moral judgments. Tracing such a development is relevant in that it also reflects the progression of a basic tenant of morality, namely benevolence. As morality evolves we extend this compassion to a wider range of entities, given that we are capable of rationally conceiving of their having a good worth taking into account.

Within the last few centuries alone we have witnessed the burgeoning of ethical consideration in the Western world from its meagre beginnings, in which only the rights of upper class white males were maintained, toward an extension of such rights to children, women, and all races; as well as, in a limited degree, to animals and environments. What I am contending is that, in so far as moral principles and standards evolve, they increasingly move away from a concern with the self alone. Once we recognize the experiences of others to be legitimate focuses for our concern, given that our actions impact on them in either positive or negative ways, we are morally required take responsibility for our actions toward them. The range of the sorts of entities that are legitimate focuses of our concern continues to broaden. I address the question of what sorts of entities are in fact legitimate focuses for our ethical concern, and how this concern should be manifest, in what follows.

3.) c.) Countering the Claim that Only Moral Agents are Worth Moral Consideration: The Logical Possibility of Morally Considering Amoral Entities

If we allow that the further development of an expanding circle of moral consideration is to be encouraged, described by Leopold and evidenced in Nash's historical account of ethical evolution, we are strategically placed for addressing the question of what sorts of things *can* be morally considered. There exists a prevalent, but nonetheless incorrect, assumption that non-human entities cannot be morally considered because they themselves are amoral. One manifestation of this position is found in the writing of Russell Dale Guthrie. The central thrust of Guthrie's position is that,

> ...the inclusion of other organisms as primary participants in our ethical system is both logically unsound and operationally unfeasible. It is illogical because we cannot consider other organisms as moral bodies and amoral bodies simultaneously. By *moral bodies* I mean those entities ultimately to be considered in evaluating the action.[7]

After characterizing non-human organism's interactions between each other as amoral, as well as their actions towards humans, Guthrie suggests, "it is difficult not to conclude that the final bond – a human's act toward other organisms – is, in and of itself, an amoral one. It becomes a moral act only when humans are affected, because our moral codes are rules of human behavior, as I assumed in the beginning, and as such, exclude other organisms as primary participants."[8] Guthrie's contention that the inclusion of other organisms as primary participants in our ethical system is logically unsound can be countered through outlining the way in which their participation need not be as moral agents. I address Guthrie's claim of operational unfeasibility later, when I explore an ethical stance that correctly accounts for the sort of relationship we should have with nonhuman life.

Guthrie supposes the fact that non-human animals are amoral, and that their behaviours are amoral, leads to the conclusion that they are not due any moral consideration; he believes that our acts with relation to them are also amoral.[9] However, I show below that the criteria to be met for moral considerability are not identical with the criteria to be met for moral agency. Guthrie problematically conflates the requirements for moral agents with those for moral subjects, when in fact, the entities to be considered on the receiving end of the act need not be moral agents; they need only be entities we can logically conceive of acting morally or immorally towards. There is no logical inconsistency with recognizing that all acts performed by beings incapable of being moral agents are amoral, while acts performed by moral agents toward amoral entities can still be moral and immoral.

Contrary to what Guthrie posits, being a moral subject does not necessitate moral agency. This is clearly evident, for example, in the moral consideration we give to extremely mentally handicapped persons who are without the capacity to be moral agents, but are moral subjects none the less. The same can be said with regard to our moral consideration of small children. The humane treatment of animals also demands moral consideration of those who are not moral agents. As such, it is not logically impossible for amoral entities to be treated by moral agents in moral and immoral ways. Nor, given the above examples, is the notion of the moral

consideration of entities that are not moral agents themselves an implausible stance to take.

I have shown that it is logically possible for an amoral entity to be considered morally by a moral agent. Now the following question is raised; if moral considerability is not logically limited to humans qua their humanity, what then is the correct standard for moral considerability? I establish that, at minimum, a subset of amoral entities *should* be considered morally, namely living things. I do this through briefly turning to the work of Taylor, Peter Singer, and Kenneth Goodpaster.

3.) d.) What Entities Are Worth Considering: Distinction Between Moral Agents and Moral Subjects and the Criterion For Moral Considerability

Taylor helpfully distinguishes between what is required for being a moral subject and what is required for being a moral agent. We, as humans, can assume the role of moral agents because we can "treat others rightly or wrongly," we have the capacity to choose whether to behave morally or immorally; while moral subjects "can be treated rightly or wrongly by others (who are then moral agents with respect to them)."[10] Taylor defines a moral subject "as any being that can be treated rightly or wrongly and toward whom moral agents can have duties and responsibilities."[11] As a prerequisite for moral subject-hood it must be possible for an entity "to have their conditions of existence…made better or worse by the actions of agents…Moral subjects must be entities that can be harmed or benefited."[12] Such a capacity is necessary for us to make sense of the notion of acting benevolently or malevolently toward moral subjects, in that there must be a good or bad to be had if we are going to effect them either positively or negatively.

It is relevant to note that on Taylor's account these entities need not be sentient. Singer's influential argument in Animal Liberation, that sentient creatures must be morally considered if we are to avoid unfounded anthropocentrism, is importantly extended by Taylor, in much the same vein as Goodpaster does in his seminal essay "On Being Morally Considerable", to include *all* living creatures within the realm of moral consideration.[13] Though seemingly radical at first read, it is not so strange to acquiesce that all living things seek to maintain their good. Goodpaster contends, "In the face of their obvious tendencies to maintain and to heal themselves, it is very difficult to reject the idea of interests on the part of trees (and plants generally) in remaining alive."[14]

On Taylor's view as well, a central nervous system is not a necessary condition for consideration as a moral subject. Taylor argues that consciousness is not required for an entity to have the characteristics on which consideration rests, namely the ability be benefited or harmed; even if some entities lack the ability to consciously aim at maintaining their good, we can still make sense of such entities being benefited and harmed.[15] Taylor's position is in agreement with Goodpaster's claim that, "Neither rationality nor the capacity to experience pleasure and pain seem to me necessary (even though they may be sufficient) conditions on moral considerability…Nothing short of the condition of *being alive* seems to me to be a plausible and non-arbitrary criterion."[16] I prefer Taylor's construal of it because rather than conceiving of the *interests* of non-human entities, which arguably evokes

a notion of conscious entities that problematically anthropomorphizes nature, the notion of being harmed and benefited requires no such contortions of what it is to have interests. Rather, the entities in question need only be conceived as having a good and a bad, a better and a worse, an ability to be harmed and benefited by us. We can improve or impoverish the lives of other living entities by virtue of our behaviour, thus the notion of moral responsibilities towards these other organisms is introduced.

As such, the practical question of how such consideration will be manifest is brought to a head. This requires establishing a position regarding what the appropriate relationship is with these moral subjects. Taylor forwards the idea of a relationship of respect, given that all living organisms have inherent value as teleological centers of life. I think Taylor's argument for advocating such an ideal for forming a moral relationship with non-humans is a persuasive one. I also think he makes sufficient headway in illuminating how such respect would be evidenced in moral decision-making processes to enable me to discuss the sorts of things that would likely be conceived as immoral acts toward nature.

3.) e.) What a Morally Sound Relationship with Moral Subjects Requires and How It is Practically Manifest in Our Decision Making Processes

3.) e.) i.) The Respect Due to all Living Organisms

Taylor argues that, in so far as a thing is a teleological centre of life, it has inherent worth. Taylor defines a teleological centre of life as any entity that can "have a good of their own around which their behaviour is organized. All organisms, whether conscious or not, are teleological centers of life in the sense that each is a unified, coherently ordered system of goal-oriented activities that has a constant tendency to protect and maintain the organism's existence."[17] If an entity is a teleological center of life, it can inevitably be harmed and benefited, thus it is due moral consideration. It has a well being separate from our own wants and needs; thus it can be conceived as having worth removed from us, of having a good of its own. Taylor maintains that "...the individual organisms, species-populations, and biotic communities of the Earth's natural ecosystems...[possess] inherent worth, in the sense that *their value or worth does not depend on their being valued for their usefulness in furthering human ends* (or the ends of any other species)."[18] As such, their worth is inherent rather than merely instrumental.

It is through this idea that an entity has inherent worth that Taylor sees us as being required to consider such an entity as,

> ...*worthy of respect* on the part of all moral agents. The attitude of respect is itself then seen to be the only suitable, appropriate, or fitting attitude to take toward the entity. In taking that attitude, one commits oneself to the following, as one's own moral norm, the principle that living things ought not be harmed or interfered with in nature, other things being equal.[19]

Respect for living organisms is not such a far-fetched claim given that they, like us, are seeking to preserve a continued healthy existence. It is reasonable to maintain that the destruction, or harming, of such life forms for no good reason is immoral,

given that these entities have a good of their own and such behaviour by us fails to reflect the respect these moral subjects deserve. The inherent worth of all living things is not a theoretical ideal, but a practical reality on Taylor's view. He provides extremely reasonable and persuasive reasons for eliminating any appeal to human superiority with regard to inherent worth.

In short, Taylor encourages us to momentarily loosen the shackles of anthropocentrism. Once we entertain the possibility that we are not the only things of importance on this large green and blue planet, the biocentric outlook outlined by Taylor becomes convincing. The outlook involves recognizing we are but one member of the community of life, just one element in a system of interdependence; accordingly, each member is equally a teleological center of life, therefore it follows from such an outlook that humans are not superior, rather they are merely one (relatively new) species among many.[20]

This view recalls Leopold. "In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies *respect* for his [or her] fellow-members, and also *respect* for the community as such [my emphasis]."[21] Ironically enough, as Leopold notes, the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating due to the fact that we are "only a member of a biotic team [as] is shown by an ecological interpretation of history."[22] Central to Leopold's ethic, as well as Taylor's, is the knowledge that "the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts."[23] From an ecologically sound standpoint we recognize humans as a comparatively new part of a community of interdependent parts. We are one species among a plethora of others, who, like us, seek to preserve their health and functioning. Arguments for the superior value of human life tend to rest on human characteristics because *we* are the ones establishing what is of value.

The characteristics *we* appeal to, from which to establish the superiority of humanity over all other living creatures, are those capacities that *we* have, and that are of use to *us*. It is from the ***human standpoint*** that we judge rationality, aesthetic creativity, individual autonomy, and free will to be desirable and good.[24] The characteristics we maintain as determining the worth of all forms of life are those that are considered valuable to us. As such we must note,

> It is not difficult to recognize here a begging of the question. Humans are claiming superiority over non-humans from a strictly human point of view, that is, a point of view in which the good of humans is taken as the standard of judgment. All we need to do is to look at the capacities of animals and plants from the standpoint of *their* good to find a contrary judgment of superiority.[25]

So construed, we can now recognize our claim to superiority is unfounded in any fact of the matter; rather, it is a preference for humanity and human capacities *because we are humans*. All living entities have goods of their own, all are goal directed, and all can be harmed and benefited. As such we have evidence that non-human entities are worth moral consideration. Respect of other living organisms is required to the extent we admit they too are teleological centers of life. As such, now we are met with the task of making such an attitude manifest in a working ethic.

3.) e.) ii.) Ethic of Respect for Nature

Taylor constructs the means by which an ethic of respect can be practically manifest through turning to an analysis of basic and nonbasic interests. The most important interests are understood as those "whose fulfillment is needed by an organism if it is to remain alive."[26] He also introduces the idea of proportionality, which answers Guthrie's worry about the operational feasibility of extending ethical concern to non-human entities.

> The central idea of proportionality is that, in a conflict between human values and the good of (harmless) wild animals and plants, greater weight is to be given to basic than to nonbasic interests, no matter what species, human or other, the competing claims arise from. Within its proper range of application the principle prohibits us from allowing nonbasic interests to override basic ones, even if the nonbasic interests are those of humans and the basic are those of animals and plants.[27]

Taylor is right to maintain that adhering to such an outlook requires nothing less than a "total reordering of our moral universe."[28] Centrally altered will be our conception of what interests are indeed necessary. Given such a reordering, many of the wrongs currently committed against nature will be recognized as the morally unjustified satiation of nonbasic interests rather than the fulfillment of basic interests. Such a restructuring not only includes considering nature in a way previously we have only considered humans, namely as moral subjects, but also requires us to fundamentally reconsider what acts are justified when it comes to significantly altering nature.

I do not deny that it can be argued that, even with Taylor's more detailed explanation of how such a theory will be implemented, a variety of questions remain regarding what constitutes basic and nonbasic interests, particularly with regard to psychological interests. There is also the lingering concern of how such a plethora of considerations will be accounted for. However, I think the answers provided by Taylor constitute enough of a basis for recognizing the unmistakable immorality of a variety of our actions toward nature. If Taylor's distinction between basic and nonbasic interests is too severe, we can instead consider a spectrum between trivial wants (as a sub-set of nonbasic interests) and basic needs (need here connoting the seriousness of what Taylor calls basic interests), and, in the aim of making manifest respect for nature, we can implement a moral requirement that we never let trivial human wants trump non-human basic needs.

Rather than construing right and wrong in terms of repercussions to the human realm alone, we must recognize that the effects of our behaviour reach beyond this boundary in morally relevant ways. The degree to which nature is harmed in an immoral way depends on our treatment of it. A wide range of current behaviours toward nature would likely fall into the realm of immoral actions if we accept that trivial human wants must not override non-human basic needs. When nature is destroyed, and the destruction is the result of our pursuing trivial wants, then such an act is immoral. As a case in point, think of the destruction of animals due to trends in what is fashionable for humans to clothe themselves in.

Another obvious occurrence of immorality is when we destroy vast amounts of nature unnecessarily in the haphazard pursuit of satisfying basic needs. Clear

cutting provides a fitting example. If we contend that we have a basic need for wood products, the legitimacy of this claim aside, we are not thus permissioned to destroy forests in their entirety, as is executed with disturbing success with clear cutting. Rather, an ethic of respect demands that we perform careful, selective cutting, while keeping intact the health and functioning of the forest to the best of our ability, as well as using wood only if necessary. As living entities ourselves resource use is inevitably a basic need of ours. Leopold himself recognized, "A land ethic of course cannot prevent the alteration, management, and use of these 'resources,' but it does affirm their right to continued existence, and, at least in spots, their continued existence in a natural state."[29] We have basic needs, the fulfillment of which is necessary for our health and functioning, but to be morally sound these needs must be fulfilled with an attitude of respect toward nature motivating our actions.

It now makes sense for me to discuss the possibility of immorality being expressed by nature manipulated in immoral ways by human beings. In the same way the permanent scars a dog who has been severely beaten continue to express to us the immoral act of a human who beat an innocent animal, so too will our immoral treatment of nature continue to be expressed by it. This may be expressed in a more or less obvious way, but the educated viewer who is privy to what is in fact being expressed - through attempting to avoid omissions and deceptions and garner knowledge of what it is - will note the human impact on nature. As such, environments altered for immoral purposes, then restructured to look as though they have been untouched, accordingly do not fail to express an immoral action. In so far as humans have immorally altered nature, and we have knowledge of this, it will be an expression of immoral human action.

3.) f.) Conclusion

I establish contra Guthrie that it is not outside the realm of logical possibility that moral agents can act morally or immorally towards amoral entities, and argue further that such is the case if the entities in question are moral subjects. I maintain that all living entities are morally considerable given that they can be harmed or benefited by our actions. Once we recognize all living organisms are teleological centers of life, respect is acknowledged as an appropriate attitude to take toward these moral subjects. We make this respect manifest in our moral reasoning through not privileging trivial human wants over other organism's basic needs, and through having that respectful attitude dictate the means by which we will satisfy our basic needs.

Once we extend the scope of moral considerability to non-human entities, and attempt to reflect respect for such entities in our moral theorizing, we can conceive of many harmful actions currently committed by humans toward nature as immoral. If we commit immoral acts against nature, then the altered environments or entities thus express immorality. As such, I am now sufficiently placed to discuss situations in which immorality is made manifest by our treatment of nature, and what such a manifestation imparts to a judgment of beauty or the lack thereof.

Notes

1. Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There (1949; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 209-210.

2. Robert Elliot, "Faking Nature," Inquiry 25 (1982): 84, 81-93.

3. Leopold, 203.

4. Leopold, 204.

5. Roderick Frazier Nash. The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 5.

6. Nash, 5.

7. Russell Dale Guthrie, "The Ethical Relationship Between Humans and Other Organisms", in Environmental Ethics: Divergence and Convergence, eds. Susan J. Armstrong and Richard G. Botzler (NewYork: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 292, 292-297.

8. Guthrie, 293.

9. The possibility of moral agency in non-human animals aside.

10. Paul W. Taylor, Respect for Nature: a theory of environmental ethics (1986; reprint, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 16.

11. Taylor, 17.

12. Taylor, 17.

13. Peter Singer, Animal Liberation, Rev. ed. (New York: Avon Books, 1990). Kenneth E. Goodpaster, "On Being Morally Considerable," The Journal of Philosophy 75 (1978): 308-325.

14. Goodpaster, 319.

15. Taylor, 63.

16. Goodpaster, 310.

17. Taylor, 122.

18. Taylor, 46.

19. Taylor, 72.

20. Taylor, 99-100.

21. Leopold, 204.

22. Leopold, 205.

23. Leopold, 203.

24. Taylor, 130.

25. Taylor, 130.

26. Taylor, 271.

27. Taylor, 278.

28. Taylor, 134.

29. Leopold, 204.

Chapter Four:

Beauty, Immorality, and Nature

For it is and always will be a fine saying that what is beneficial is beautiful, what is harmful is ugly.[1]

–Plato, The Republic

4.) a.) Introduction

I propose that when it comes to making claims of beauty morality plays a vital role, as is the case with beauty claims regarding nature. One possible explanation of the interplay between immorality and aesthetics has been addressed in recent philosophical works under the rubric of 'trumping' by Allen Carlson and Yuriko Saito, which I discuss in detail.[2] I suggest an alternative, though complimentary, possibility in which both our sensing and thinking selves are jointly present; namely, when we make a mixed claim of beauty or the lack thereof. If we account for mixed claims we can conceive of moral considerations directly impacting on our claims of beauty in a way that is significantly different from trumping. I see this as a fertile site for illuminating the relevance and impact that moral and intellectual considerations can have from *within* the realm of aesthetics, specifically with regard to beauty.

I contend that the thick and thin senses of beauty do not always remain separate, and furthermore, when they are mixed, they are mixed in our act of apprehension. In addition, I hold that if any displeasure is involved in our act of apprehension, then a claim of pure beauty is rendered impossible. By coupling this with the premise that it is not pleasurable to apprehend immorality being expressed, I argue that immorality being expressed removes an object or entity from the sphere of what we would characterize as beautiful in the mixed or thick sense of the word. It follows from this that nature altered in an immoral way by human beings fails to be beautiful in both the mixed and thick sense of the word.

4.) b.) Morality Trumps Aesthetics

Both Carlson and Saito defend a version of morality trumping aesthetics in answer to the question regarding what role morality plays in relation to aesthetics. Saito suggests that there are circumstances in which we are unable to find nature beautiful for moral reasons. She is here thinking of natural disasters such as a "hurricane, earthquake, tornado, avalanche, tidal wave, volcanic eruption, flood, and the like."[3] In such cases,

> Whether desirable or undesirable, wise or unwise, our human-oriented moral sentiments do dictate that we not derive pleasure (including aesthetic pleasure) from other human's misery, even if it is caused by nature taking its course…although all natural phenomena have their place, their potential aesthetic value is held in check or is overridden by our moral concern for the pain, suffering, and difficulties that these phenomena cause for human beings.[4]

I agree that immorality can influence a judgment of thick or mixed beauty or the lack thereof. However, I think it questionable to suggest that this is always due to the fact that our moral concern dictates that we do not derive pleasure of any sort from an earthquake, tornado, volcanic eruption, etc. To use one of Saito's examples, we can conceive of molten lava being beautiful in the thin sense of the word. I submit that, though seemingly cold hearted, we cannot always turn off our sensory reaction characterized in thin beauty claims at witnessing molten lava bubbling down a volcano - even when we know it will destroy the human settlement below. I do not think it unreasonable to claim that molten lava *is* visually stunning, though in the case of it destroying a human settlement, it *is* also morally distressing. (Of course such an answer is satisfying only if we keep the senses of beauty separate.) I do allow that our moral concern dictates that we do not derive pleasure specifically from the destruction of humans in such circumstances. However, as I have put forward in Chapter One, our moral judgment is not unrelated to our estimation of beauty in the mixed sense. In so far as we are addressing a mixed claim, the moral displeasure that results from apprehending what is jointly expressed by the thinly beautiful lava means that our experience of the lava in such a context is not one of pure pleasure.

Yet, what I have suggested above is not what I believe Saito is arguing. She is addressing times when our ability to aesthetically respond is entirely quashed. Saito is contending that there are times when morality trumps in such a way that our capacity for aesthetic pleasure is completely overridden. It is not so much that these things cannot be thinly beautiful, but that when immorality enters into the picture the unmediated responses of thin beauty dissolve, or perhaps, are fundamentally inaccessible. Carlson puts forward the empirical claim that there are times when the negative nature of thick expressive qualities may make it impossible or psychologically difficult to enjoy in the thin sense.

> This is the claim that when we are actually unable to find an object aesthetically pleasing in the thick sense because of the (negative) nature of its expressive qualities, this often makes aesthetic enjoyment of this object in the thin sense psychologically difficult, if not impossible. If this claim is true, then in some instances any aesthetic enjoyment of an object will be impossible because of the nature of that object's expressive qualities.[5]

This is the statement that provoked this thesis, and it is a statement that ignites far more issues than I can deal with at this time. Most intriguing is the possibility that a mental judgment might be capable of, not merely trumping, but fundamentally altering the nature of a sensory response. By this I mean our thin response not only becomes inaccessible, but that there is a metamorphosis from a positive one to a negative one. I avoid the myriad of associated questions that result from entertaining this possibility, and address the issue far more cautiously, by maintaining that our mental and sensory experiences often occur in a proximity so intimate that we deal with it as one comprehensive experience. As such, we have results similar to those outlined by Carlson and Saito, though for different reasons. The relevance of my position being that it opens the realm of aesthetics to moral and intellectual values in a more far-reaching and comprehensive way, at least in so far as these pertain to beauty.

In the case of Saito, I am proposing that beauty claims are more complex than her view accounts for, namely that there is room from *within* beauty claims for moral considerations. In the case of Carlson, I am supporting his view that there is an important relationship between thick and thin beauty claims, such that our claims of beauty can alter due to the introduction of new knowledge regarding our thick beauty considerations. However, this is not limited to trumping of the sort Carlson and Saito address. I am making a case for beauty claims to alter when the negative nature of what is expressed makes the experience of beauty impossible because we have a mixed claim and immorality is being expressed.

It is not difficult to conceive of an instance of what Carlson and Saito propose. For example, let us say I am unable to appreciate the sensuously appealing texture of a cloth that is composed of human hair derived from Nazi concentration camp victims. This is because my moral concern consumes the entire experience, thereby making any sensory pleasure in the thin sense of beauty impossible. It is impossible for me to enjoy because my moral reaction overrides any other considerations that may enter, be they regarding thin beauty claims or otherwise. However, we can also conceive of scenarios where thin beauty still manages to be manifest despite immorality being expressed via thick considerations. In as much as some things might become psychologically difficult or impossible to aesthetically appreciate due to moral reasons, empirical evidence also exists in which – despite highly negative moral expressions – thin beauty may still be expressed *and* appreciated.

Consider Arthur Danto recounting "Monet's anguished discovery that, sitting by the body of his late wife Camille, his model, love, support, angel, he had, instead of grieving, been studying the purple on her eyelids. He wondered what manner of monster he had become."[6] Does such a reaction make Claude a moral monster, an artist (and as such, arguably, extraordinarily consumed with thin considerations), or merely a sensing and thinking entity – for which sensory elements count towards his experience? Our ability to react positively to combinations of colours and forms, despite the mentally distressing, even morally reprehensible, associated life values, is unsettling – yet, none the less, possible. We may not like that we are capable of doing such a thing, but this does not change the fact that we are both capable of, and do, exhibit such behaviour. That this does occur speaks to the weight of our sensory response in our beauty claims.

Now in the case of Monet, it is not that the purple on his wife's eyelids expresses something immoral, rather, it is the nature of his response that we might find problematic. One could argue that we find such a response questionable because in lieu of grieving he was responding to the thin beauty of the colour of her eyelids. There are two levels of analysis manifest here, one is the upshot of apprehending the object or entity; the second is our characterization of the nature of that apprehension. Here an important distinction must be made between the times in which the immorality is being expressed by an object or entity directly, and the times in which we may feel immoral for having a seemingly callous response. In the latter case, it is our response we deem to be immoral, rather than considering that which is directly expressed to be immoral. In such cases we rebuke ourselves for our response to thin beauty because we fail to be overwhelmed in the way Saito outlines, the negative and morally relevant aspects of the thing viewed fail to quash our pleasant sensory

response – and we feel badly about it. It could be argued that this second level guilt thus provides a negative association with the thing apprehended, and for that reason also makes impossible a claim of pure beauty in the mixed or thick sense of the word, but this is a level of abstraction I am not primarily going to be addressing. What I am interested in is not this guilt; rather, for my purposes, I wish to address cases in which something immoral is directly expressed by the thing apprehended.

4.) c.) Mixed Beauty Claims Provide Room for Moral Considerations From Within the Realm of Aesthetic Considerations

In so far as we are not comfortable with our ability to derive sensory pleasure from the apprehension of a pleasing collection of forms, while finding what is represented by those forms unpleasant morally or intellectually, perhaps we can say in such cases that rather than our thin response being overridden it is held in check. Saito argues that "although all natural phenomena have their place, their potential aesthetic value is ***held in check*** or is overridden by our moral concern [my emphasis]."[7] If our response to thin beauty is being held in check by our moral concern, we may still feel the tug of formally derived sensory pleasure, but on a moral level be ashamed of deriving any sort of pleasure from an immoral or destructive occurrence. Saito says that our moral sentiments dictate that we do not derive pleasure from another human's misery, including aesthetic pleasure.[8] However, if we are dealing with a mixed case, for an experience to be beautiful we address the sensory *and* mental pleasure derived. Saito maintains elsewhere that our "aesthetic experience begins and ends with the sensuous surface – although, of course, our initial reaction is subject to modifications and revisions with additional information."[9] But if the revision is such that morality trumps beauty proper, thereby prohibiting the possibility of pleasure, and we are thus unable to contemplate thin beauty, we are drawing a moral boundary on the sorts of things we are capable of contemplating the beauty of.

If by moral trumping we mean that moral considerations have far more authority than any aesthetic experience, and that the aesthetic experience no longer counts in situations where moral concerns come into play, I think we are failing to address the aggregate sense of beauty found in mixed claims. I also think we fail to adequately account for the influence of the sensuous component of beauty. I still allow that, in general, moral considerations take priority over aesthetic considerations, and that this occurs to such an extent that there are times consideration of a thing's thin beauty becomes impossible. However, in so far as we are discussing things that we *are* able to contemplate the thin beauty of, then with regard to mixed claims, we are necessarily acknowledging both mental and sensory elements at work in a conflicting claim. If we are to ignore or repress the thin response and suggest that the moral element trumps such considerations, then we are addressing the primacy of morality *over* aesthetics, rather than addressing the role morality plays *in* aesthetic judgments (specifically with regard to beauty). In mixed claims moral considerations are capable of contributing displeasure to our overall estimation.

Saito is correct in that we should not derive pleasure from apprehending pain or suffering being expressed, and in so far as we are moral I do not think we do. Yet, in the example previously discussed, this is not to say that we necessarily do not jointly derive pleasure through thin beauty considerations from the glowing red of the flowing lava. However, unless we limited our analysis to a thin beauty claim we would not call such a thing purely beautiful. That such is the case need not be because we cannot derive pleasure of the sort characterized by thin beauty from such a thing given the role of moral trumping. It is also probable that this is due to the fact that such a thing is capable of conveying pleasure and displeasure jointly. In mixed claims, the lava thinly expressing beauty is not unrelated to the thick beauty consideration of the displeasure we feel at apprehending the suffering jointly expressed, and it continues to remain both pleasant and unpleasant so long as considerations of beauty are not made impossible due to the overriding nature of our moral convictions. Only in so far as the immorality expressed is to such a degree that it makes impossible considerations of thin beauty does immorality trump beauty, and I leave it up to the reader to decide if flowing lava, or any other natural disaster that destroys human beings, qualifies as this type of morally consuming scenario.

The distinction between a thing that expresses something immoral, and deciding that our reaction to it is immoral, is relevant here. Nature qua nature is neither moral nor immoral. As such, in the case of glowing red lava heading towards a human settlement, I suggest we are dealing with immorality at the second level I described. Our capacity to derive pleasure from something so destructive to humans is the morally suspect aspect; it is not the behaviour of the lava itself that can be deemed immoral.

Regarding any case where immorality is expressed I am presuming that we do not feel pleasure at apprehending this expression of moral wrongness/immorality. If, for example, we derived pleasure (as is related to thick beauty considerations) from watching children and animals being needlessly and violently tortured, then I suggest we fail to be moral creatures. In so far as I am making an argument addressing fellow moral creatures I presuppose that you would not derive pleasure at apprehending immorality being expressed. However, in so doing it does not consequently follow that pleasure is necessarily tied to moral rightness. All I assume here is that we do not mentally derive pleasure from apprehending what we decipher to be morally wrong being expressed, that we find such a thing unpleasant to apprehend. Yet, this is important to underscore because it is central to what I argue regarding immorality being expressed and our reaction to it.

4.) d.) Mixed Beauty Claims: The Way In Which Mental and Sensory Components are Constituent Parts

To address the way in which mixed claims differ from thick and thin claims construed independently of each other it is useful to turn to an example. Dwelling momentarily on chocolate cake will help to make manifest the way in which we can account for pleasure derived mentally and pleasure derived via our senses as separate and independent occurrences, as well as exhibit a way in which the two can overlap such that a tension is created.

I may claim a hefty slice of chocolate cake is delicious and eating it is a veritable sensuous pleasure to partake in. At the same time the knowledge that it will inevitably clog my arteries and expand my waist makes eating the same slice of cake mentally unpleasing to consume. Let us imagine this slice of cake is so mammoth and rich that a single piece is unavoidably unhealthy, and one bite necessitates eating the entire piece immediately. In so far as we actively attempt to separate our sensory reaction and mental judgment we *can* remain consistent. One can argue that my sensory reaction to the cake is quite wonderful while my mental reaction is less so, and leave it at that. Both apply to the same moist cake, and one need not trump the other. However, to presume only one element effects our analysis of whether consuming the slice of cake as such is pleasurable or not, I maintain, is to oversimplify the matter and to consequently fail to get at the complexity that is human experience. In a case where I experience the pleasures and pains mentioned above, I would ordinarily describe the experience in the following way…While devouring the cake, I simultaneously feel the displeasure that results from an unhealthy indulgence, in combination with the pleasure of luxuriating in the taste of creamy chocolate. Resultantly, I would not call the experience purely pleasurable; rather, an unresolved tension between conflicting pleasures and pains is evidenced.

Another example of conflicting pleasures reflecting both mental and sensory considerations may convey with more immediacy the difficulty, if not impossibility, inherent to attempts at isolating sensory apprehension from that which is expressed via that apprehension. Consider a caress from a lover to illustrate this point. When limited to the physical sensation, the caress can be said to be pleasurable. It can be argued that the same physical caress by the same individual is remarkably different after discovering said lover is cheating on you. This is because the touch conveys more than just pleasing physical contact, it jointly expresses the knowledge that you are not the only one being caressed in such a manner – and for those of us who are in monogamous relationships this is a severely *un*pleasant sort of experience.

The contrary argument is that the sensation of the caress remains the same physically, and to the degree we keep our physical and thinking selves separated it *does* remain a pleasant sensation. However, I propose that when the adulterous lover caresses you, the physical pleasure of the caress is combined with the mental displeasure at the cheat having the audacity to touch you (given your knowledge of his/her deception), and we have these conflicting elements presented simultaneously within the same experience – conveyed by the same touch. I think the reason for this is that once related knowledge is introduced, the sensation expresses that knowledge unless we attempt to do the mental gymnastics necessary to separate the two things being jointly conveyed.

I suggest that once we are introduced to relevant knowledge about a thing apprehended via our senses, the object or entity henceforth expresses that association. I have argued prior that the thin sense of beauty, when defined in isolation from the thick sense, involves a variety of difficulties. For further evidence that a thin sense of beauty alone leaves something to be desired, let us momentarily suppose that the only relevant considerations necessary when making a judgment of beauty are formal. Take for example Clive Bell's aesthetic hypothesis, in which the only knowledge we

need bring to a work of art is "a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space."[10]

Imagine limiting our viewing of an image by Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn to formal considerations alone. In so doing we would need to put aside the ingenious way he captures the warmth and personality of his subjects and some would argue their very humanity. We would have to ignore that the images involve representations of human forms contextually placed and any associated meanings that this may impart. Most would concede that these are important aspects of the painting, and that recognizing that these are human forms depicted in particular contexts is part of what is required for thoroughly assessing the painting's beauty (or lack thereof). I suggest we would fail to address all that is relevantly conveyed to us through the act of perceiving such a combination of forms if we are forced to blinker all the associated concepts, contexts, and values that accompany viewing a human being depicted on a canvas.[11] Rembrandt serves as a fitting example given the volumes his paintings convey beyond surface and form.

When life values are expressed there is no way to effectively remove them entirely from our act of apprehension. As with the case of Rembrandt for instance, once we know that a collection of forms represents a human, that particular facial expressions convey certain feelings or states of mind, that certain costumes represent certain time periods as well as vocations, etc., we are hard pressed to ignore this. The same can be said for observing living entities within their contexts. Though we may occasionally will ourselves to consciously focus on the thick or thin elements of beauty (and although on some occasions we do so unconsciously), for the most part, when we apprehend beauty, we do so both thickly and thinly simultaneously. To consistently and forcibly limit our conception of beauty to the thick sort is too narrow; it requires squashing the vivid and spontaneous direct sensory response we have to shapes, colours, sounds, textures, etc. To consistently limit our conception of beauty to the thin sort is also too narrow, it requires squashing what is expressed through apprehending a collection of shapes, colours, sounds, textures, etc., in particular contexts. Attempting to consistently keep the results of our sensory and mental modes of apprehending separate from each other evokes a sort of mind-body separation that manipulates the nature of our typically comprehensive analysis of pleasure. Mixed claims make room for life values of a moral nature to enter the realm of beauty in a way that is neither too restrictive, nor too non-aesthetic. In mixed claims we address how these two considerations simultaneously play a role, and for my purposes, how this plays out when they are in conflict.

To return to the lover's touch example described above, the touch conveys both sensory and mental information, and it is the touch we would objectify as the source of our pleasure if we were to call it beautiful. I propose that mental and sensory components are not typically separated when dealing with the claims we make regarding pleasure, nor, is it the case when we are making claims regarding pleasure objectified. I contend that we usually bring both sorts of considerations to how we experience and estimate pleasure, and thus to how we characterize beauty. They usually express in unison because we are thinking and sensing beings - the mixing occurs in us - in our perception and analysis. The degree to which they mix is the degree to which we are thinking and feeling beings simultaneously, they are

housed in one sensuously derived experience that expresses mental associations. They are joined to the extent that apprehending a thing or entity via our senses will also result in the associated life values being expressed. They are constituent parts of our overall judgment – both are independently legitimate and each provides relevant information for characterizing whether an experience is pleasurable or not. We not only look, listen, hear, taste, and touch, we also address what these things mean in their contexts and subsequently come away with a claim regarding whether X is pleasant to apprehend as such. This is an assessment of beauty in a broad construal of the term rather than delineating it into specific senses, though these specific senses help clarify what is pleasant and unpleasant within a mixed claim. This is where I see a possible venue for the revision of beauty claims to take place. Rather than trumping, as Saito suggests, this revision could be differently manifest through recognizing that the additional information derived through thick criteria contributes displeasure to the experience, and we would not call such a thing beautiful as a result.

Mixed claims directly account for the sorts of demands for harmony forwarded by the likes of Plato, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and George Santayana. Plato acquiesces that when form and content reveal beauty in harmony the combination is the greatest spectacle of beauty.[12] In his essay "Beauty" Emerson draws the following apt metaphor: "Beauty without grace is the hook without the bait. Beauty, without expression, tires."[13] He claims further, "Things are pretty, graceful, rich, elegant, handsome, but, until they speak to the imagination, not yet beautiful."[14] With regard specifically to the moral component Emerson maintains that, "All high beauty has a moral element in it…and the beauty ever in proportion to the depth of thought."[15] This underlines the relevance of moral and intellectual soundness when considering the criteria involved in mixed claims. Santayana phrases it wonderfully when he contends that beauty is a realization of this harmony, "When our senses and imagination find what they crave, when the world so shapes itself or so moulds the mind that the correspondence between them is perfect, then perception is pleasure, and existence need no apology."[16] My construal of beauty in the mixed sense was partially motivated by, and is consistent with, such claims.

In so far as we recognize mixed claims a dilemma *is* present if the two senses conflict, in that one sense is pleasurable while the other is not. I believe it reasonable to be concerned with whether we should, or do, call X beautiful in such circumstances. In so far as both elements are simultaneously present, jointly significant, and maintain their individual character, it creates a problem because in a beauty claim we are addressing the pleasure derived, or the lack thereof, when we apprehend a thing. In mixed claims we are not separating that which causes pleasure from that which causes displeasure, instead we are making an estimation of whether a thing, as such, is beautiful when both senses are at play. This is not to say we cannot discuss the separate elements alone. However, in so far as both are at play in the same experience, and in so far as we are thinking and feeling holistic beings, it is relevant to address the resulting mixed claim. I suggest many of our claims are of the mixed variety because once relevant knowledge is introduced regarding an object or entity it inevitably continues to express that information in the future.

To focus on a sensory or mental response alone, though sometimes informative, neglects to address the shape our natural means of perceiving take. I

suggest it is an empirical fact that we broach beauty in the thick, thin, and mixed sense. We typically address beauty in the mixed sense because we do not tend to separate the mental and sensory elements of an experience. Rather, we address what an experience is as such. To adequately address beauty we must acknowledge the means by which we as human beings derive and objectify pleasure. In our day-to-day lived experience, we simultaneously experience pleasure and pain via sensory and mental venues in such a way that they are not tidily separated, thus we must account for the pleasures and pains expressed in this interconnected way.

4.) e.) Example of Conflicting Thick and Thin Considerations in a Mixed Claim of Nature Immorally Altered By Humans

Consider a final example regarding a paradigmatic case of beauty, namely that of nature, to underscore what is argued above. Picture an expansive forested grove on a sunshiny summer day (believed to be pristine); think of Kant's "flower-strewn meadows" which compliment the green of the foliage.[17] The blue sky is spotted with billowing clouds. The sun pleasantly warms your skin and you have ample sunscreen on for protection. The smell that permeates is fresh and inviting and you remembered to take your allergy medication this morning. The light breeze gently moves the leaves creating an organic melody that surpasses any music made by humans. When limited to this knowledge, let us say we agree such a scene is beautiful in any sense of the word.

Now, imagine all the seeming natural unity occurring before you is fabricated.[18] The trees are plastic, as are the flowers. The smell you attributed to the forest is a new scent commercially produced to have this intended effect on you, and the breeze is the result of ingeniously placed fans in various undetectable locations within the plastic trees. This set up is provided by an immense logging company with the intention of showing the masses that natural forests are not needed because we can mass-produce these synthetic ones which are equally 'pleasing' to apprehend. Let us maintain further that such a display expresses life values that are immoral, in light of Chapter Three. As such, the sensory response to the collection of plastic, perfume, and technology is pleasurable, yet the life values expressed are unpleasant to experience, given their immorality.

To the degree thick and thin beauty is married in mixed claims, I suggest we would not call this farce of a forest beautiful as such. Our sensory apprehension is not separated from the life values expressed through such forms in such a context. The knowledge we gain when we avoid omissions and deceptions reveals that immorality is being expressed. The unpleasantness that is the result of acknowledging what such a thing expresses, in such a context, makes the experience of mixed beauty one that is not solely pleasurable, and as such, not beautiful according to the definition of beauty Santayana provides.

I have already aligned myself with Santayana's view that beauty is intimately linked with pleasure, and furthermore that this pleasure is of the pure sort. In so far as we are speaking of beauty "…this value is positive, it is the sense of something good, or (in the case of ugliness) of its absence. It is never the perception of a positive evil, it is never a negative value."[19] I have suggested previously that we

remain in the realm of pleasure and displeasure. Therefore, beauty brings no displeasure with it; it is a case of experiencing pure pleasure apprehended either in the thick sense, the thin sense, or both in mixed cases. What is important to note here is that we characterize as beautiful what is pleasurable, not that which is not, and in so far as mixed claims address both thick and thin considerations, both must be pleasurable for a mixed claim to be one of beauty. In so far as we accept that a thing we characterize as beautiful brings nothing of negative value with it, then the answer regarding conflict in mixed claims of beauty is simplified. If a thing fails to be thickly *or* thinly beautiful in a mixed claim we do not have a case of beauty.

Any time displeasure is a product of apprehending the end result is not an experience of beauty in that it is not an experience of pure pleasure objectified. However, much more can be said as to how close to being beautiful a thing is. Things can be more or less pleasurable to apprehend. Although we may fail to derive pure pleasure from apprehending an object or entity this is not to say we do not derive more or less pleasure from apprehending some objects or entities than others. We are thus met with the possibility of a spectrum of beauty on which some things are closer to, or further from, pure beauty. Also, a variety of reasons can be provided for why they lie closer to, or farther from, pure beauty. It is beyond the scope of this thesis, though an interesting question, to address these varied possibilities. It is enough for my purposes to have established that when we are making a mixed claim both thick and thin considerations play a role in whether a claim of beauty can be made, and to have forwarded a way in which this is manifest when both maintain their original character.

A thing may be pleasant for the senses to apprehend, but after being introduced to unpleasant thick elements, that very same form responsible for my claim of thin beauty now expresses something mentally unpleasant to apprehend. The experience, as such, is no longer one of pure pleasure. In some circumstances great mental horror may completely override our ability to contemplate thin beauty; I agree with Saito and Carlson that there are times when this is the case. Yet, even in spite of our ourselves, sometimes sensory appreciation can continue to make itself evident; think of poor Claude studying the shades of purple on his dead wife's eyelids.

I contend that the reason these pleasures or displeasures are jointly manifest in the same experience is because the experience of pleasure and displeasure is usually of both the mental and sensory variety, most times we apprehend in this more complex way. The exceptions include those times we make a conscious effort to emphasize only one element, or we naturally focus on thin or thick beauty, or scenarios where our moral revulsion is so extreme that sensory pleasure becomes fundamentally inaccessible.

I suggest moral considerations intersect with beauty considerations in *us*; *we* are addressing pleasure, and the pleasure derived at apprehending an object or entity is derived via our senses as well as mentally mediated. As humans we are sensory and mental beings, and the experience of apprehending involves both – the connection between the two occurs within us. When we apprehend an object or entity via our senses we have a sensory reaction, yet, once new knowledge is introduced about that object or entity, apprehending it via our senses now indubitably carries

with it that information, provided that such information is considered relevant. In so far as we are experiencing both sensory reactions *and* forming mental judgments, at the same time in the same experience, when immorality is expressed displeasure follows and pure pleasure is not derived - therefore, I maintain, it is not an experience of beauty. Thus, when immorality is expressed by out treatment of nature, it follows that it is not beautiful in the thick or mixed sense of the word.

4.) f.) Conclusion

In claiming a thing is beautiful, typically we have interacted with it both physically and mentally, and are making a claim regarding both elements such that they are not separated. I call these mixed claims. It runs counter to a purely formalist theory of aesthetics, and also counters a theory of aesthetics that gives primacy to mental analysis through repressing or ignoring our sensory reaction. Rather, what I propose is a recognition and validation of both elements and their relation to each other established through our act of apprehension. Moral considerations are integrated with beauty claims to the extent that mental analysis is integrated with the sensory apprehension of an object or entity, and we make a judgment of the experience as such. Though we can differentiate between the two aspects our lived reality is a messy combination of the two. Recognizing this opens the door wide to a deep and meaningful relationship between ethics and aesthetics as it pertains to beauty.

Immorality being expressed is not pleasant to apprehend. Thus, when it is expressed, and we are making a mixed or thick claim of beauty, it falls outside the realm of what is beautiful. This is not to say that some things do not still manage to be closer to beautiful than others, however, the displeasure would taint any possibility of pure beauty. The spectrum of beauty to ugliness presents a variety of lingering questions, as do the remaining issues about the impact thick and thin beauty considerations may have on each other when occurring within mixed claims. I have intentionally avoided comparing and contrasting the relative virtues of mental and physical pleasure as well as their possible impact on each other such that either changes their original character. These concerns go beyond the scope of this thesis. It is enough for my purposes to have established that our mental and sensory experiences most times occur in a proximity so intimate that we deal with it as one comprehensive experience. My handling of mixed claims addresses, and in this thesis is limited to, the times in which both our unmediated sensory response and mediated mental judgment of the life values expressed retain their distinctive character.

Given that nature can be harmed in an immoral way and can express this, and that we find immorality unpleasant to apprehend, then it follows that nature harmed in an immoral way fails to be beautiful in the mixed or thick sense of the word. This is not necessarily because morality trumps aesthetics, but rather, oftentimes it is because our claims of beauty tend to involve a great deal more than just sensory pleasure.

Notes

1. Plato, Plato's Republic, trans. G.M. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), 119.

2. I take the terminology of 'trumping' from Allen Carlson who makes use of it in the following article. Allen Carlson, "On aesthetically appreciating human environments," Philosophy and Geography 4 (2001): 19, 9-24.

3. Yuriko Saito, "The Aesthetics of Unscenic Nature," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 56 (1998): 109, 101-112.

4. Saito, "Unscenic," 109.

5. Allen Carlson, Aesthetics and the Environment: The appreciation of nature, art and architecture (New York: Routledge, 2000), 145.

6. Arthur Danto, The Transfiguration of The Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 143. Consider as another possible example Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi Propaganda film Triumph of the Will, discussed in detail in Mary Devereaux's piece "Beauty and Evil: the case of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*", in Aesthetics and ethics: Essays at the intersection, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 227-256. Also consider Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* or a selection of Robert Maplethorpe's sexually charged nude photographs of children, just to name a few.

7. Saito, "Unscenic," 109.

8. Saito, "Unscenic," 109.

9. Yuriko Saito, "Appreciating Nature on its Own Terms," Environmental Ethics 20 (1998): 146, 135-149.

10. Clive Bell, "The Aesthetic Hypothesis", in Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996), 115, 113-116.

11. This is not to say cases will never arise in which no mediated mental analysis need apply. We may, on occasion, have no relevant knowledge of the thing apprehended. However, with a lack of knowledge it follows that no negative mental considerations thereby contribute to our analysis. If you have no existing knowledge about a thing then it obviously cannot contribute to your claim; but I suggest situations such as these are exceptionally rare. Human curiosity is voracious, and we inevitably seek to understand what a thing is, what it does, and what it means in such a context; we are interested in what it expresses beyond its surface and form.

Furthermore, if we are apprehending in the mixed sense and there are no life values notably expressed, the absence of negative life values is still a contributing factor.

12. Plato, 72.

13. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Beauty", in The Conduct of Life, vol. 6 of Emerson's Complete Works, (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1886), 284, 265-290.

14. Emerson, 287.

15. Emerson, 290.

16. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty: Being the outline of aesthetic theory (1896; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), 164.

17. Immanuel Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, trans. John T. Goldthwait (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), 47.

18. I am indebted to Allen Carlson, Robert Elliot, and Cheryl Foster for their use of this sort of thought experiment. Carlson, Nature, Art and Architecture, 147. Cheryl Foster, "Aesthetic Disillusionment: Environment, Ethics, Art," Environmental Values 1 (1992): 208-209, 205-215. Robert Elliot, "Faking Nature," Inquiry 25 (1982): 88-89, 81-93.

19. Santayana, 31.

Chapter Five:

Three Philosophical Case Studies and The Merits and Failings of Beauty Claims When Used in an Appeal to Preserve Nature

A nobler want of man is served by nature, namely, the love of Beauty.[1]
–Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature"

5.) a.) Introduction

Besides the writing of Carlson and Saito focussed on in Chapter Four I think it worthwhile to turn to some other philosopher's means of approaching the intersection between ethical considerations and nature as it relates to aesthetic considerations, and more specifically for my purposes, beauty. To this end I explore contributions by Robert Elliot, Cheryl Foster, and Marcia Eaton; namely, restored environments through the work of Robert Elliot, natural environments detrimentally altered and reflecting this alteration through the work of Cheryl Foster, and natural elements introduced to new environments in a destructive way through the work of Marcia Eaton. I suggest ways in which the distinction between thick, thin, and mixed beauty might serve to clarify their positions. I also make use of these examples when I discuss the application of thick, thin, and mixed beauty claims used in appeals to preserve nature, and the merits and deficiencies therein.

5.) b.) Three Philosophical Case Studies

5.) b.) i.) Robert Elliot's Manipulated Environments

Elliot addresses the failings of the argument that the destruction of natural environments is fine provided that we restore such environments in "Faking Nature." His article highlights the relevance of thick considerations given that two environments may appear identical regarding thin considerations, one natural, the other a human construction, yet express very different things. The human manipulated environment, when put forth as a replacement, is comparable to a "fake" in the art world.

If, hypothetically, it were physically possible to restore natural environments to the complex functioning exhibited prior to destruction, Elliot maintains that these restored environments are still lacking in a fundamental characteristic central to our appreciation of such environments in their original form. He argues that the distinction in the art world between a forgery and the real thing is likewise applicable to natural environments devastated and then restructured; namely, in both cases we are concerned with the "genesis and history" of the thing apprehended, and in both cases that which is forged is of lesser value.[2]

Origins matter, cases in which we realize that what we are witnessing is a forgery make evident the way in which a "discovery about…origin changes the valuation made of it, since it reveals that the object is not of the kind that I value."[3] The same applies to natural environments, we "value the forest because it is of a

specific kind, because there is a certain kind of causal history which explains its existence", and, furthermore, "the causal genesis of forests, rivers, lakes, and so on is important in establishing their value."[4] Elliot's claim of value regarding the forest entails much more than a surface analysis.

Though Elliot distances his position from aesthetics[5], he supports my view that value claims regarding nature must be correctly informed, and that knowledge can lead to what appears to be identical objects or entities expressing very different things. We appreciate the life values expressed by forests, rivers, lakes, etc., untouched or preserved by human beings. If it is otherwise, our value claim alters accordingly. Elliot suggests "We value the forest and river in part because they are representative of the world outside our dominion, because their existence is independent of us."[6] Possible life values expressed regarding our lack of significant impact might involve respect, care, symbiosis, or the like; independently of us we might note the expression of organic growth, the complexity of life itself, etc. In emphasizing the demand for knowing what a thing is prior to making a justified judgment of it, Elliot states that when he judges a forest the,

> ...evaluation is informed and directed by my beliefs about the forest, the type of forest it is, its condition as a member of that kind, its causal genesis and so on...Knowing that a forest is not naturally evolved causes me to feel differently about it: it causes me to perceive the forest differently and to assign it less value than naturally evolved forests.[7]

The relevance of the life values expressed is importantly brought to the fore here. Elliot sensibly acknowledges there is a difference between originals and replacements in both art and nature, and that each express very different life values. If we recognize things with a causal genesis that is not primarily controlled or dictated by the impact of humanity as being of positive value, in a way that is different from that which has its causal genesis in human intervention, then we have a strong case for preserving that which is not fundamentally altered by human beings.

If we acquiesce further such value judgments are important to aesthetic claims in so far as they pertain to thick and mixed beauty we could also make a case for the differences in these life values being significant enough to change our characterization of beauty in these senses of the word. However, such considerations must take their place in mixed claims if we are not to fall prey to the criticism that this position is too distanced from the sensuous element of beauty. In addition to the importance of the value attached to a natural environment as opposed to human created environment, the intent behind the manipulation Elliott is characterizing is relevant. Such manipulations must be morally sound for them to remain in the realm of beauty; the motivations behind these alterations are vital with regard to what is expressed. We can look back to Taylor for direction in how to interpret such manipulations. Elliot's position underscores the relevance of correct knowledge, significant because of the differing life values expressed. My position demands that the environmental manipulations discussed by Elliot must have morally sound motivations if they are ever to be characterized as beautiful in the mixed or thick sense of the word. Foster also emphasizes the relevance of thick considerations, specifically with regard to our aesthetic claims about nature.

5.) b.) ii.) Cheryl Foster's Tainted Sunset

Foster investigates the intersection between aesthetics, nature, and ethical considerations in her piece "Aesthetic Disillusionment: Environment, Ethics, Art." Foster suggests, similarly to Carlson and Saito, that there are "ethical limitations on what *ought* to be enjoyed."[8] She sees as justified the assertion "that a person ought to cease to enjoy a life-denying spectacle of human origin."[9] Foster focuses on what she sees as a fundamental irrationality manifest if we appreciate environmentally destructive situations, and couples this with an ethical concern.

Foster interprets situations in which we exhibit aesthetic enjoyment of specifically environmentally destructive practices as problematic for the following reason:

> An attitude that expresses continued enjoyment in an explicitly acknowledged destructive situation indicates a lack of harmony between the perception of beauty and the greater value of life itself. This disjunction between pleasure and the context of pleasure is at bottom irrational: to appreciate genuinely destructive situations is to approve them, and continued (or universalized) approval of this sort would lead, given what we know through environmental science, to the destruction of life itself. Life provides the context and conditions for aesthetic pleasure.[10]

On this view it is irrational to have a disjunction between pleasure and the context of the pleasure. Though in the course of her paper Foster addresses Hospers' distinction between the thick and thin senses of aesthetic, in the paragraph above such a distinction is not obvious. A clear distinction between the two lends greater clarity; we can then read her as saying an attitude that exhibits appreciation of thin beauty, despite the thing failing to be thickly beautiful (given the expression of a destructive situation in which the source of the thin beauty will ultimately be destroyed), is fundamentally irrational. I argue that we are entitled to say this is problematic if we are addressing the mixed sense of beauty, though I contend that this is probably because we are experiencing pleasure and displeasure simultaneously, and pure beauty is meant to account for objectified pleasure alone.

I deny that when we make a thin beauty claim in a context wherein the life values expressed are ultimately life denying that irrationality need be evidenced. Rather, it is likely we are experiencing conflicting though equally applicable pleasures and displeasures. Foster maintains that, "Finding beautiful that which will obliterate any possibilities for the perception of beauty is, I believe, irrational."[11] I suggest it would be irrational to maintain the behaviour that will obliterate any possibility for beauty if our goal is the pursuit and maintenance of beauty. However, our response to thin beauty is not subject to the dictates of rationality, it is a sensory response. We can choose not to sustain the source of a pleasant sensory response because to do so is not rational. As a case in point, we can choose to stop doing a variety of pleasant things, not because it is irrational to find them pleasant but because to continue to make available these pleasures is at bottom irrational for any variety of reasons. The judgment that it is irrational to continue to make available particular sensory pleasures, which are described by thin beauty, need not destroy the pleasure derived from apprehending such things. Though I argue we would not claim

a thing that will obliterate any possibility for the perception of beauty is beautiful in the thick or mixed sense, it is not due to an innate irrationality being manifest in our appreciation of thin beauty. It is more likely the result of the contribution that thick criteria make to our judgment.

For Foster, claiming an environmentally destructive thing is beautiful is wrong on two counts. First, to do so is "intellectually unsound since universal support of life-denying processes leads to the cessation of aesthetic experience whatsoever" and second because it is "ethically suspect…it elevates personal fulfillment over respect for life generally"[12] Foster maintains that there are ethical limitations on what ought to be enjoyed. She states that, "While it may be possible to enjoy artistic *representations* of vice and depravity, it is also possible to claim that we *should not* enjoy them when they are overtly life-denying. To this degree we can claim that there are ethical limitations on what *ought* to be enjoyed."[13] I see both of these elements as being relevant, but manifest differently than Foster contends.

The intellectual unsoundness is accounted for in our thick and mixed claims of beauty in that thick beauty here is meant to account for what is morally and intellectually expressed by an object or entity from within a context. The extent to which these considerations express something negative distances them from beauty. As far as ethical considerations go, they can trump aesthetic considerations in their entirety, and as such destroy our ability consider a things beauty at all. However, times when this is not the case, a negative element is still contributed through thick considerations. As for avoiding the elevation of personal fulfillment over respect for life generally, we do this in our aim to get it right about what a thing is; this involves sacrificing the pleasure derived from apprehending a thing believed to be beautiful if such pleasure is the result of aesthetic omissions or deceptions. Also, respect for life, as outlined by Taylor, is ideally imparted in our moral judgments reflected in thick and mixed claims. Regarding Foster's ethical limitations on what ought to be enjoyed I think it questionable to suggest we ought not find certain things beautiful so we must suppress our natural reaction to their thin beauty, to hold it under wraps while our superior ethical judgment deems it *ought* not be found enjoyable. Rather, I suggest, in so far as we discussing thick or mixed beauty, a thing that is morally flawed is removed from the realm of things we would call beautiful because of the displeasure contributed via thick considerations. We are still free to find it thinly beautiful. If limited to the thick considerations Foster here outlines, without recourse to a mixed claim, her position is too far removed from the sensuous element of beauty.

Foster utilizes the example of the viewing of a sunset to show the way in which additional information of a moral sort can alter our claim of beauty. In her example the sunset is spectacularly-coloured such that she takes great pleasure in its beauty. A friend then informs her that the colour is the result of the proliferation of sulphur dioxide in the air due to a factory polluting the river and destroying a marsh upstream.[14] As a result Foster suggests she "ought to feel vexation and a cessation of pleasure."[15] I agree that on a moral level such life values are not pleasant to apprehend. To the extent the sunset thus expresses immoral behaviour by humans toward nature it is not pleasant to apprehend in this regard. This is a thick consideration though; to continue to admire its thin beauty need not make manifest an

immoral perspective on our part, as such it is not the case that we ought to stop finding it thinly beautiful. Though we may feel guilty about our response to thin beauty, such a response is not inherently immoral given that it is an unmediated response. Yet, Foster is correct in that the expression of immorality through our treatment of nature is not beautiful to apprehend in the thick or mixed sense of the word. I have argued that this is due to the life values so expressed and their relevance to our claims of beauty, thereby making a tension between incompatible pleasures and pains evident. Marcia Eaton's position runs contrary to the view that conflicting thick and thin beauty claims are problematic; rather, she just sees this conflict as making manifest differing notions of beauty.

5.) b.) iii.) Marcia Eaton's Purple Loosestrife

Eaton describes two uses of the term beauty in her piece "Kantian and Contextual Beauty", which I align with Hospers thick and thin senses of aesthetic, discussed in 1.) c.) ii.). She utilizes purple loosestrife as an example of the way these two senses can be used to arrive at different characterizations regarding beauty about the same entity.

Eaton acknowledges that the imported plant "if left alone will rapidly destroy the delicate ecosystem so important for water purification and for the support of a wide range of plant and wildlife."[16] She suggests that it is a "dangerous, even evil, plant" yet is still willing to claim she "cannot prevent herself from finding the plant quite beautiful."[17] We shall put aside the notion of an evil plant, given that nature qua nature is amoral. Instead, consider the introduction of an exotic breed to an ecosystem by human beings, which results in the devastation of that ecosystem, to be the location where immorality could possibly be seen as residing.

Contrary to Eaton's finding the plant quite beautiful regardless, her landscape designer friend "finds it ugly-even repulsive" given her intimate awareness of the destructive role it plays in the swamps.[18] Eaton's 'solution' for this problem is to show that there are just two different senses of the word beauty being forwarded. I have made a case that the issue is more complex than just two independently construed and individuated senses of beauty, the importance of which will become apparent in what follows.

Eaton attempts to clarify how she can hold that the purple loosestrife is beautiful while her friend maintains that it is ugly. She does allow that if we are given newly acquired knowledge about purple loosestrife's capacity to detrimentally harm ecosystems, we can claim that what was previously believed to be beautiful is no longer found to be so.[19] This is primarily because in the thick or contextual sense, "The pleasure required for the judgment that something is beautiful diminishes, disappears, or is even replaced by displeasure as one's beliefs or values change."[20] But she also seems comfortable with saying that despite the introduction of this information she continues to find it beautiful.

In the case of Eaton maintaining that despite its 'evilness' she still finds the purple loosestrife 'beautiful' I suggest a few possible things are going on. One is that given her clarification of the different senses of the word beauty, Eaton is claiming that she still finds it thinly beautiful and is not implying that she finds it thickly

beautiful. I contend that this is a viable interpretation because she describes the experience as she stands by the lake in terms of thin beauty considerations, namely her sensory reaction to the vibrant colour; "looking at the purple blossoms that stand out so vibrantly against the more or less uniformly coloured background of the swamp, I cannot prevent myself from finding the plant quite beautiful."[21] It is also probable that she feels the pull of the demands of thick beauty, and for that reason she recognizes her claim to be somewhat problematic, given the moral questions raised regarding the plant. This would explain why she says "I cannot *prevent* myself from finding the plant quite beautiful [my emphasis]."[22] There would be no reason to think she should prevent herself unless a tension is present.

I suggest that in the case of Eaton's beauty claim regarding purple loosestrife she finds it beautiful in the thin sense, while her friend finds it ugly in the thick or mixed sense. If Eaton were to consider it from the perspective of a mixed or thick beauty claim, to the extent she agrees something unpleasant is expressed via the loosestrife regarding the immanent destruction that will result due to human intervention, then she too would not call it beautiful; though at no point need she deny the appeal of its thin beauty. Eaton is right in that part of what is at issue here is the variety of ways we commonly use the term beauty with a complete failure to differentiate the senses. Furthermore, once clarity is arrived at regarding these senses we must still debate about what life values are actually expressed, what life values are pleasant to apprehend, as well as who is in the best position to judge.

I suggest that Eaton's knowledge of the destruction the loosestrife wreaks in such an environment has prevented her from calling the loosestrife beautiful without amendment; she modifies her claim through revealing that she feels she should prevent her response and fails. This is where the overlap between thick and thin claims becomes evident. I believe that much like Carlson, Saito, and Foster, Eaton sees the moral imperative laying some kind of claim on our thin response, rather than guilt or some moral appeal here we hear a brief reference to thinking she should prevent her response. I believe this is why Eaton almost apologetically recognizes her pleasurable sensory response to the loosestrife. In a mixed claim Eaton neither has to ignore thick considerations, nor berate herself for her response to the thin beauty. But through calling attention to the two considerations she underlines the relevance of both, as well as hints at the overlap between the two in her own response to the loosestrife - though she does not develop this idea further.

5.) c.) Application of Beauty Claims When Used as an Appeal to Preserve Nature

5.) c.) i.) Application of Beauty Claims in the Thin Sense When Used as an Appeal to Preserve Nature

If our unmediated sensory response to nature is pleasant and we objectify that pleasure then we have a case of thin beauty. To the extent we share the same biology and responses, we will agree elements of, if not all aspects of, nature are thinly beautiful. Such claims are not thus irrelevant given their grounding in unmediated responses; if we share such a response, and pleasure of this sort is recognized as a meaningful good we pursue, a ground for preserving nature is still provided.

Apprehending nature may likewise cause additional goods such as increased health and well being, even when limiting ourselves to the thin sense.

The deficiencies of such claims include their innate anthropocentrism as well as the moral questions that arise from a slavish pursuit of pleasure for pleasure's sake alone. If we could imitate nature to such a degree that the same type of pleasure was derived in this sense, there is no rationale supplied from within the realm of thin beauty providing any reason for why we should not do so. Thus, to the degree we agree such things are equally pleasant to apprehend via our senses as their natural counterparts then Elliot's 'restored' environments are uncontroversially beautiful in the thin sense, as are Foster's sulphur dioxide distorted sunset and Eaton's purple loosestrife proliferating in, and destroying, swamp ecosystems. Aesthetic appeals on this model will involve anything that we take pleasure in apprehending on a sensory level, regardless of what such a thing is, and does, in such a context.

The dilemma Foster addresses of taking pleasure in a thing that by its very nature destroys that which is the source of pleasure comes into play here in that the preservation of that which is pleasant to apprehend is what is at issue. The pleasure derived at apprehending is the only thing of value when beauty is construed in the thin sense. Perhaps in such circumstances a compromise need be met between doing what is necessary to sustain further aesthetic consumption of that which is pleasant to apprehend, while maximizing the availability of that which is pleasant to apprehend. Appeals to preserve environments on such a view are inherently anthropocentric and morally unprincipled, but nonetheless convincing to the extent we consider pleasure derived through sensory apprehension and objectified of independent value.

5.) c.) ii.) Application of Beauty Claims in the Thick Sense When Used as an Appeal to Preserve Nature

If our mediated mental response to the life values being expressed by nature is pleasurable to apprehend and we objectify it then we have a case of thick beauty. To the extent that humans are equally rational and exposed to the same data we should come to like conclusions regarding what is beautiful, and what best positions us, or others, to make these judgments. Such claims are not thus irrelevant given the primacy of mediated mental judgments and the distancing from our immediate sensory response; if we agree a thing is thickly beautiful we are imparting a moral and intellectual judgment that reflects an aspect of our pleasure derived from apprehending such a thing.

As such, to the extent 'restored' landscapes, brightly coloured sulphur dioxide induced sunsets, and purple loosestrife proliferating swamp ecosystems, express immoral treatment of nature by us, then we do not have cases of thick beauty (pending on the motivation for these alterations). However, this element can be accounted for via intellectual and moral judgments removed from the issue of beauty, and to the extent that they are they gain the substance attributed to such judgments. That moral judgments are regularly given primacy over aesthetic judgments is an idea that has been revisited often in this thesis. As such, perhaps moral claims proper, that make use of the same criteria addressed by thick beauty, are better put to use in moral and intellectual claims removed from the role they can play in beauty claims.

However, if we use these criteria to both make independent moral and intellectual judgments, as well as account for the role these have in our beauty claims, then such considerations do double duty. We can thus use the moral and intellectual considerations of our non-aesthetic judgments of nature to underline the need for preservation, as well as recognize the impact this information has on our beauty claim in the thick and mixed sense. We then have the potential for moral, intellectual, and aesthetic reasons to support each other for preserving nature.

5.) c.) iii.) Application of Beauty Claims in the Mixed Sense When Used as an Appeal to Preserve Nature

If our unmediated sensory response is pleasurable, and our mediated mental response to the life values being expressed by nature is pleasurable, and we objectify it, then we have a case of mixed beauty. This is not to deny that in some cases we keep separate our mental analysis and sensory reaction, though I have suggested in 4.) d.) that when such a separation is consciously attempted to be induced by us it is difficult if not impossible. To do so requires an unnatural maintenance of a rather drastic mind/body separation, requiring a disconnection between our thinking and sensing selves in our claims of beauty. In so far as we are willing to keep our thinking and sensing selves separate there is no tension with regard to conflicting claims. However, I argue that most times such considerations are not so tidily separated.

I suggest that we can and do associate moral or intellectual contextual judgments with our sensory response – and come away with an overall impression, as is the case with mixed beauty claims. When these two senses of beauty are in harmony with each other we have a comprehensive sense of beauty unparalleled by either sense in isolation. As mentioned previously, Plato suggests when we perceive a thing that is beautiful both in form and character we have unity that results in the most beautiful thing to apprehend. "When a man's soul has a beautiful character, and his body matches it in beauty and is thus in harmony with it, that harmonizing combination, sharing the same mould, is the most beautiful spectacle for anyone who has eyes to see."[23] His example can be extended to the apprehension of non-human entities as well, in that when a thing expresses both positive life values as well as encapsulating such life values in a form that we take great pleasure in apprehending via our senses we have an experience of beauty that is compellingly comprehensive and pervasive. When we encounter beauty in the mixed sense of the word we have a rare and fulfilling experience that we should esteem accordingly.

To the extent nature is untouched there is no possible element of immorality evidenced, and as such, no place for such considerations to detract from such a thing's thick or mixed beauty. Nature untouched lends itself to beauty in a way human created things do not, in that it is immune to morally negative expressions, if we allow that nature qua nature is amoral. If we couple this with the thin beauty I would suggest is inherent to the vast majority of nature, then nature is strikingly placed for appreciation. One could argue nature, as I construe it, no longer exists; therefore what I have suggested above bears little or no relevance. However, the distance between beauty and ugliness is not a void, there are a variety of positions

between these two instances. As such, I suggest that a contributing factor to thick or mixed claims of beauty regarding nature is the degree to which it lends itself to being located closer to beauty in so far as it untainted by immoral expressions which are a factor of human intervention.

There still remains the possibility for negative life values of the intellectual sort. For example one could assert that nature expresses chaos, and this counters our intellectually derived preference for order, though arguably, nature is complexly ordered. Our changing values both moral and intellectual have regularly structured our beauty claims, and will continue to do so. As new information is introduced and utilized to inform our beliefs, it impacts on our notions of what is beautiful. It is only to the extent that we agree on what nature in a pristine form, devastated form, and all the areas in between, expresses, and justify such positions given our entitlement through knowing what it is and avoiding omissions and deceptions, that we can formulate concrete thick or mixed beauty claims about nature.

In the mixed sense Elliot's 'restored' environments, Foster's brightly polluted sunset, and Eaton's purple loosestrife, all fail to be beautiful if we assume each results in immorality being expressed. This is not because such things fail to be thinly beautiful, they can continue to be so; rather, we would not call the objects or entities beautiful because they fail to be beautiful in the mixed sense of the word. Mixed claims have the weight of moral and intellectual considerations on their side as well as our immediate sensory response. As such I think when we can make claims regarding nature's beauty or proximity to beauty in the mixed sense, then we are uniquely placed to provide beauty claims as a reason for preservation.

5.) d.) Conclusion

Elliot argues that origins are important to our estimation of a thing's value, while Foster argues for the importance of the intellectual and ethical soundness of our aesthetic claims. Both of these views encounter the same difficulties inherent to thick beauty claims made in isolation; namely, that the relevance of the sensory component of beauty, which is so essential to any aesthetic claim, is overlooked. When lent the support of mixed beauty claims I venture that the original concerns evidenced still remove the entities from the realm of beauty, but for different reasons. Mixed claims allow for these worries to remain less controversially within the domain of aesthetics. Eaton's effort to have the two senses remain separate proves so difficult that even she fails to be able to call a thing which expresses controversial life values beautiful without qualification. Though I suggest modifications to each piece discussed, each theorist recognizes that moral and intellectual judgments contribute importantly to value claims of nature (Elliot), be they aesthetic (Foster) or pertaining directly to beauty (Eaton). I forward mixed claims as a complimentary contribution to what has been proposed by Carlson and Saito as the more tidy separation derived from a description that accounts for morality trumping from outside the realm of aesthetics; I seek to make room for the impact of moral considerations from *within* the realm of aesthetics. There are many more possibilities for development in this vein; I think Plato, Emerson, and Santayana had it right when they postulated beauty is most

satisfying when sensory, moral and intellectual pleasures are harmoniously conveyed in the same form. [24]

The differentiation between thick, thin, and mixed claims serves to clarify what is contributed by beauty claims made in an effort to preserve nature. It is also useful for recognizing the merits and deficiencies of these sorts of appeals. The most satisfying experiences are those in which thick and thin considerations simultaneously convey pleasure. When we are discussing mixed beauty, and we are accounting for the apprehension of beauty found in nature, we are provided with an experience that underlines pleasure that is both reflective of positive life values as well as sensory responses that are valued. Aesthetics informed as such lends claims of beauty significant clout when we appeal to beauty to protect nature. It is a uniquely encompassing and harmonious experience that touches our senses as well as our minds.

Notes

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature", in The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House, 1940), 9.

2. Robert Elliot, "Faking Nature," Inquiry 25 (1982): 85, 81-93.

3. Elliot, 86.

4. Elliot, 88-89.

5. Elliot, 90.

6. Elliot, 86.

7. Elliot, 91.

8. Cheryl Foster, "Aesthetic Disillusionment: Environment, Ethics, Art," Environmental Values 1 (1992): 212, 205-215.

9. Foster, 213.

10. Foster, 210.

11. Foster, 211.

12. Foster, 211.

13. Foster, 212.

14. Foster, 212.

15. Foster, 212.

16. Marcia Eaton, "Kantian and Contextual Beauty", in Beauty Matters, ed. Peg Zeglin Brand (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 28, 27-36.

17. Eaton, 28.

18. Eaton, 28.

19. Eaton, 33.

20. Eaton, 33.

21. Eaton, 28.

22. Eaton, 28.

23. Plato, Plato's Republic, trans. G.M. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1983), 72.

24. Plato, 72. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Beauty", in The Conduct of Life, vol. 6 of Emerson's Complete Works (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1886), 284, 287, 290, 265-290. George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty: Being the outline of aesthetic theory (1896; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), 164.

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